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HISTORY
OF THE
UNION
OF
THE KINGDOMS
OF
GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND;
WITH
AN INTRODUCTORY SURVEY
OF
HIBERNIAN AFFAIRS,
TRACED FROM THE TIMES OF CELTIC COLONISATION.

BY
CHARLES COOTE, LL.D.

Uno se pectore
Condidit, et major conjunctis viribus exit. CLAUD.

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1802.

THEORY II

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TO THE MOST NOBLE

THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE.

MY LORD,

YOUR great ancestor, sir William Petty, was one of the early advisers of a consolidation of the English and Irish parliaments: sensible of its expediency, he recommended it by strong arguments. As, with his fortune and talents, you inherit his predilection for such a measure, a work which traces the progress and relates the completion of the late scheme of union may with obvious propriety be inscribed to your lordship.

Your judgement, on a perusal of this history, may induce you to disallow the pretensions of the author to the praise of literary merit; but your politeness will excuse the freedom of the dedicator. If the performance should be entitled to approbation, your lordship

DEDICATION.

ship will have no reason to complain : if censure should be more justly due to it, your character will suffer no discredit, as your name was introduced without your knowlege or consent.

I am, my lord,

Your respectful servant,

CHARLES COOTE.

*Doctors' Commons,
March 13, 1802.*

PREFACE.

THE union which took place on the first day of the present century was a transaction of sufficient dignity and moment to claim the tribute of a distinct history. The causes which gave rise to it, the circumstances which attended its progress, the incidents by which it was hastened or retarded, and the successive adjustment of the terms of incorporation, demand a copious narrative, and require a fullness of illustration. As, from the political constitution of each of the kingdoms which the framers of the scheme proposed to unite, it could not be carried into effect without the deliberation and assent of the respective legislatures, the greater part of the history will necessarily consist of parliamentary debates: but the discussion of so important a project, by the enlightened members of the British and Hibernian senates, cannot prove uninteresting either to the politician or the general reader. Splendid displays of eloquence will sometimes illumine

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the page : closeness of argumentation will at other times prevail : varieties of remark and allusion will occasionally illustrate the subject ; and the information which the work will contain will not be unaccompanied with the gratifications of entertainment.

The compiler of ~~this~~ history has not merely consulted the ordinary vehicles of intelligence, but has had recourse to numerous pamphlets published by respectable and well-informed individuals, and has also been favored with private communications. He therefore confidently hopes that the work will be found authentic; and the statements correct ; and he has endeavoured to render his style not unworthy of the subject.

SKETCH
OF
THE HISTORY OF IRELAND;
FORMING
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ACCOUNT OF THE LEGISLATIVE
UNION BETWEEN THAT ISLAND AND GREAT-BRITAIN.

FROM the natural position of Britain and Ireland, we might have expected to observe, in the records of the earliest times, the prevalence of a political connexion between the islands, if we were not taught by general history, that countries of considerable extent, long after the æra of their original population, remained under the divided sway of petty princes, who did not look far beyond the limits of their own territories. Such, we may conclude, were the Asiatic governments which immediately succeeded the patriarchal system. Such was the state of polity in Africa, after it had been peopled by the descendants of Ham; and Europe, colonised by the posterity of Japheth, exhibited similar features.

Celtic emigrants from Gaul or Britain seem to have been the first inhabitants of Ireland; and it is certain or probable that they long continued in a state of the grossest barbarism. Colonies of Belgæ afterwards passed over, and, having subdued the Celtic tribes, formed

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establishments in the southern parts of the island. The descendants of those invaders founded a monarchy in North-Britain, early in the sixth century ; and, on the other hand, the Irish princes were dispossessed of a part of their country, in the sequel, by the attacks of the Danes and Norwegians, who erected petty principalities in the maritime districts.

The introduction of Christianity and literature tended to promote civilisation among the different tribes ; but it had less influence over the posterity of the Celtæ than over the other inhabitants of the island. The former, insusceptive of refinement, fondly adhered to ancient customs, however absurd ; while the minds of the latter were more pervious to improvement, and more ready to comply with reasonable changes, though they were less civilised than their English neighbours.

While England prospered under the government of the second Henry, Ireland, nominally divided among five kings (under whom were a great number of turbulent chieftains or heads of clans), was in a state of great disorder, from the prevalence of intestine broils. Henry, desirous of profiting by these commotions, invaded the island ; and the terror of his arms produced the submission of its princes. He pretended to subject them to a tribute, and assumed the title of supreme lord of Ireland ; but his success was very imperfect, and the influence which he retained was chiefly confined to the district of Meath, the lordship of Leinster, and some maritime towns. Into these parts only were the English laws introduced, the native princes being suffered to govern the people by their former laws. This indulgence did not conciliate the Irish, who viewed the English colonists with eyes of jealousy and hatred ; and frequent hostilities arose between them. The chieftains

chieftains also continued to make war upon each other ; and the English barons who had obtained grants of land did not act with that concord and unanimity, or that prudence and propriety, which might have impressed the natives with the force of example.

Similar disturbances convulsed the island, with little intermission, during the reigns of many of Henry's successors. Richard I. made no attempts to tranquillise the country ; but John, less inattentive to that object of policy, enforced peace and order for a time, and, dividing the possessions of the English into twelve shires, introduced a variety of useful regulations. The feeble and capricious administration of the third Henry did not quell the turmoils or improve the state of Ireland ; and, even under his son Edward, scarcely any progress was made in those respects, though the deliberations of occasional councils or parliaments aided the efforts of the successive governors of the colony.

In the reign of Edward II., the calamities of foreign invasion were added to the former miseries of the country. An army of Scots landed in Ulster, and furiously attacked the English, but did not meet with that success which, by the representations of the Irish chiefs, they had been led to expect. After several years of hostility, they received a total defeat, which crushed their hopes of the conquest of Ireland.

It was the general wish of our monarchs, that the English and Irish should form one people, governed by the same laws ; but this union was obstructed by various causes. The Irish chieftains preferred their own laws, by which they were indulged with a greater latitude of tyranny. The common people, though exposed to aristocratic oppression, were in some points less

controlled, and were less severely punished by law, than the new colonists. The English barons, aspiring and licentious, drove the neighbouring natives into insurrections by arbitrary proceedings, and gratified their pride and rapacity by punishing the resistance of the oppressed; and, when any of the Irish, relaxing in their attachment to old customs, petitioned for the benefit of the laws of England, the nobles studiously counter-acted such requests, by dissuading their sovereign from a grant which they pretended would be impolitic.

It does not appear that any parliament, constituted in the English mode, met in Ireland before the reign of Edward III. A colonial assembly, composed of the temporal nobility and the prelates, formed the only parliament which the governors held before his time. It was far from being an object of ambition to attend these meetings: it was rather deemed inconvenient and irksome: but, on extraordinary occasions, a numerous body assembled. This was the case at Kilkenny, where a very important ordinance was enacted, with a view of restraining that love of change, or that spirit of association, which had induced a great number of the English to follow the Irish laws, and form matrimonial and friendly connexions with the descendants of the old inhabitants. It denounced the punishment of high treason against every individual of English descent who should intermarry with the Irish, or submit to their laws; subjected to confiscation of lands all who should persist in the use of the Irish language, dress, and modes of life; and rendered it penal to give protection or encouragement to the obnoxious aliens. This statute established an unfortunate distinction between
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the English of blood and the English of birth, and embittered the animosity between the Irish and the occupants of the pale or the English territory.

Two expeditions of Richard II. into Ireland had little effect in pacifying the country, though the majority of the princes professed an acknowledgement of his sovereignty. Henry IV., embroiled by the effects of his usurpation, suffered the Irish to encroach on the colonial possessions; and his successor, involved by his ambition in a war with France, did not extend the pale. During the civil war in England between the houses of York and Lancaster, Ireland was in a state of comparative tranquillity. The colony, indeed, was harassed by the occasional incursions of the chieftains; but some of these freebooters desisted from their inroads, on the payment of an annual pension by the counties of the pale.

The policy of the seventh Henry induced him to attend to the affairs of Ireland. To secure the full dependence of the colony on the English crown, he influenced the great council of the pale, by the medium of the lord-deputy Poynings, to the adoption of a law, providing that no parliament should be holden in Ireland, unless the governor should give a previous intimation to the English monarch of the causes for convoking it, and that no acts should pass in it, unapproved by the king and the privy-council. He also procured an act for extending to the colony the efficacy of the English statutes.

After an interval of peace, hostilities were renewed between the English and the Irish; and, during the greater part of the reign of Henry VIII., mutual inroads and ravages were frequent. That prince at length assumed the title of King of Ireland, and obliged the

chieftains not only to acknowledge his temporal authority, but also to admit his claim to the supremacy of the church. The submissions of the chiefs, at this time, were almost universal; and they agreed to the nomination of commissioners, who should decide their suits at law instead of their former judges, but not in general according to the English code. The parliament of the pale had before declared by act, that the kings of England should always be considered as having the sovereignty of Ireland, which was an inseparable appendage to the imperial crown of the former realm.

In the short reign of Mary, the colonial territory was augmented by the incorporation of two counties; and steps were taken for the unreserved introduction of the English laws and customs into the other parts of the island.

The endeavours of queen Elizabeth to propagate the reformed religion in Ireland were far from being attended with complete success. The new creed was adopted by the few inhabitants of the pale; but the generality of the Irish refused to renounce their old tenets, and warmly resented the attempts of the colonists to enforce their submission to the protestant doctrines. Some of their chiefs revolted from the queen, and diffused devastation over the country; and the sanguinary dissensions between the powerful nobles of English blood increased the disorders of the island. The most turbulent rebel was Shane O'Neal, who tyrannised over Ulster, which was also harassed by the Scots. After his death, a great part of that province was vested in the crown; but the act which ordained this alteration was not strictly enforced. A revolt of the earl of Desmond produced new commotions; and that of the earl of Tyrone followed; but, at the time of the queen's decease,
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notwithstanding the aid of the Spaniards, the rebels were almost entirely subdued.

A new scene opened in the reign of James I. When his troops had suppressed all remains of rebellion, he resolved to establish a regular government, in lieu of the desultory efforts and the very imperfect administration of his predecessors. He suffered the chieftains to possess their lands by no other tenures than such as prevailed in England; transplanted multitudes of his British subjects to different districts, particularly to Ulster; erected new corporations; studiously encouraged trade and manufactures; instituted seminaries of education; and accomplished the difficult task of extending the English laws over all the provinces of his western kingdom. He improved both the civil and ecclesiastical governments; and, that the papists might not have the superiority in the parliament, he granted the right of election to many towns in which the protestant interest predominated.

In consequence of this settlement, Ireland for many years advanced in prosperity. The hostilities by which it had so long been harassed gave way to apparent amity; and the useful arts were more diligently pursued. But the Irish, though quiet, did not cultivate peace in their hearts. Their chieftains repined at the abolition of their system of law, and at the loss of a great extent of territory by the confiscations which had followed the rebellions. Their clergy were enraged at the restrictions upon the catholic worship, and at their exclusion from the ecclesiastical preferments; and the former animosity entertained by the nation in general against the colonists, was heightened by religious bigotry to such a degree of passion and virulence, that a resolution was secretly formed for the ruin of the

the protestant church and government. A dangerous rebellion broke out, which was not suppressed before the death of Charles I., to whom its origin was falsely imputed. The lands of the rebels and of the most active royalists were granted by the English republic to the opposers of the unfortunate monarch; and, while a great number of the catholics were suffered to emigrate, the rest were confined to the western parts of the island. The country was, for a short time, annexed to England by a republican and legislative union; but, on the restoration of Charles II. the separate parliament was re-established. A new settlement of estates now took place, by which some portions were restored to the catholics. In this reign, the ill effects of the civil war were in a great degree removed by national industry, though much distress was occasioned by the prohibition of the export of cattle to England.

About this time, an attentive consideration of the interests of the two countries induced sir William Petty to recommend the subjection of both to 'one legislative power and parliament;' but his advice was disregarded by the negligence and impolicy of the government, though it was strengthened by the suggestions of the board of trade in Ireland.

Under the sway of James II. the kingdom became less flourishing; and the war in which the papists engaged for the support of that weak prince, obstructed the retrieval of the affairs of the realm. The reign of William, by restrictions of the Irish trade, particularly in the woollen branch of manufacture, also injured the interests of the country. The conduct of the English parliament disgusted the patriots of Ireland; and Mr. Molyneux, a bold supporter of her legislative independence, entitled himself to their applause, though

though his efforts did not subdue the prejudices of the domineering nation, which was more intent on urging its claim of authority, than disposed to grant to its Irish neighbours a due share of constitutional and commercial benefits, by effecting (according to the advice of the same writer) an incorporation of the two parliaments.

The frequency of misgovernment in Ireland, and the decay of trade, prompted the peers of that realm, in the second year of queen Anne, to propose a more close connexion than that which then existed between the kingdoms, and to represent, in particular, a legislative union as the object of their wishes. Both houses, some years afterward, in congratulating her majesty on the Scottish union, exhorted her to promote the extension of the same blessing to their country. Her ministers, however, satisfied with the consolidation of the two British realms, left the connexion with Ireland unimproved; and her reign was unfriendly to the promotion of internal concord among her Hibernian subjects, as it produced some severe laws against the catholics.

During the rebellion against George I., the people of Ireland evinced a spirit of loyalty, rather than a desire of co-operating with the British malcontents. Complaints of poverty and distress were renewed in this reign, notwithstanding the advancement of the linen manufacture. The parliament endeavoured, but with faint efforts and little success, to remove the grounds of complaint. The British legislature, at this time, asserted its claim of supremacy by a positive statute, declaring, that it had full power and authority to bind the Irish nation by its laws.

While George II. reigned, Ireland was in general free from dangerous turbulence; but its improvements
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in arts and manufactures were not so considerable as its natural advantages might seem to promise. It was ruled by a junto of ambitious men, who attended more to their own aggrandisement than to the welfare of the people; who engaged, on condition of enjoying a monopoly of power and office, to procure a parliamentary majority for the support of the crown; who vigilantly guarded those entrenchments by which religious and political jealousy had fortified a part of the community against the bulk of the nation; and who encouraged or suffered the worst members of the favored body to harass and oppress the most respectable individuals of the obnoxious sect. The court did not always remain on terms of harmony with this aristocratic faction. Contests sometimes arose, by which the power of the phalanx was endangered; but, though its influence was weakened, it retained sufficient authority to continue its arbitrary career.

From the decease of the late king to the present time, the history of Ireland has been unusually interesting and important. In the earlier part of this reign, disturbances originated from the misery and discontent of the peasants, who, under the denomination of White Boys, Steel Boys, &c. encroached on the property and security of their neighbours, and filled the provincial districts with alarm. These commotions, though they were sometimes apparently suppressed, were not long discontinued. Irregular and licentious acts, insults and outrages, were, and still are, more prevalent in that country than in any other part of the dominions of the crown.

During the administration of the viscount (now marquis) Townshend, the endeavours of the court were
renewed

renewed with vigor against the leaders of the aristocracy; and the effect was a considerable diminution of their credit and power. But the evil was not removed; and these conflicts gave strength to another party, more inclined to favor the people, yet not free from selfish ambition and rapacity. By the efforts of this body of men, a bill was procured for limiting to eight years the duration of the parliament; and some other advantages were obtained for the nation. But these were not sufficient: the state of the country required more substantial benefits.

While the contest between Great-Britain and her colonies in North-America called the attention of writers to the nature of government, and to the forms and the interests of political establishments, the acute and intelligent Adam Smith, in his *Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations*, delivered opinions highly favorable to an union with Ireland. That kingdom, he said, would not only derive a freedom of trade from an incorporation with Britain, but would acquire 'other advantages, much more important, and which would much more than compensate any increase of taxes that might accompany that union.' The grand benefit, he added, would be the complete deliverance of the major part of the people from the yoke of an aristocracy founded on the odious distinctions of religious and political prejudices—distinctions which, more than any others, animated the insolence of the oppressors and the indignation of the oppressed.

The authority of such a writer gave great weight to a similar proposal which Dr. Tucker, dean of Gloucester, had long before addressed to the government and the public, not merely as his own suggestion, but as the wish of 'every generous disinterested patriot of both

both kingdoms.' The proposition, however, served as a topic of discourse rather than as a ground of immediate action, though the affairs of Ireland were not neglected.

The American war, while it checked the progress of commercial prosperity in Ireland, furnished an opportunity of asserting claims long cherished in the minds of aspiring individuals, but which had lain dormant for want of public encouragement. An army of volunteers started up not only for the purpose of repelling invasion, but with a view of enforcing, by firmness of countenance and resolution of mind, the grant of those rights which Britain ungenerously withheld. Amidst the increasing difficulties of the war, and the general danger of the empire, policy required an acquiescence in the demands of a spirited nation. The trade of Ireland was now freed from the restrictions by which it had been long shackled; and she received, as a favor, the allowance of a plenary commercial intercourse with the British settlements in America and Africa, on condition that her parliament should enact the same impositions and regulations which Great-Britain had ordained, or should decree in future, for her own trade with those colonies.

These grants were followed by constitutional concessions. The volunteers and the public having loudly called for a recognition of independence, the offensive statute of the sixth year of George I. was abrogated; and it was the intention of the ministry to adjust a plan, not of legislative union, but of a solid connexion not incompatible with the existence of separate parliaments. All attempts for this purpose, however, were eluded by the ambition and jealousy of the leaders of the Hibernian parliament; and the proposed negotiation

tion was declined. Mr. Grattan, for his services in obtaining the repeal, was almost idolised by the public, till his rivals contended that the mere abrogation was insufficient: he was then assailed with invective, and the reward which had been voted to him by the commons became a strong ground of reproach. A declaratory law was demanded for the removal of all doubts, and Great-Britain acceded to the requisition; but the final adjustment was neglected. Though the anti-unionists pretend that the settlement of that time was intended to be final, the statement here given may serve to invalidate their assertions.

As the bill of repeal, and the subsequent act, were deemed by the British cabinet injurious to the connexion between the countries, propositions were framed by Mr. Pitt for permanently securing to Ireland a full participation of commercial advantages, with a proviso that she should contribute, in proportion to her growing prosperity, to defray the expences required in time of peace for the protection of the trade and general interests of the empire. But Mr. Grattan and his associates strongly resisted the offer, alleging that a part of the scheme * tended to subvert the independence which had been lately recognised; and, though a majority agreed to the introduction of the bill, the fear of losing this superiority induced the court to yield to the vigor of opposition.

In the discussion of the merits of these propositions, some of the ablest speakers of the British parliament recommended a complete union of the kingdoms. Lord Sackville expressed an earnest wish for the appointment of commissioners to expedite that object: lord Stor-

* That article which required the uniform adoption of the British regulations in the trade with the colonies.

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mont also intimated a desire of its accomplishment: the late earl Camden prophesied that such an event would take place, though he might not live to see it; and lord North was convinced that much benefit would result to both nations, whenever they should be so connected as to form one people, under one government and one legislature.

When the visitation of Providence had for a time disqualified our sovereign from the personal exercise of his functions, the two houses of the Irish parliament, without that solemn deliberation which the case required, voted an address to the prince of Wales, desiring him to act immediately as regent. They did not consider, that, as the king of Great-Britain (by their frequent recognition) was necessarily king of Ireland, the regency of the latter kingdom ought to follow that of the former, and that it was their consequent duty to wait the determination of those branches of the British legislature which were constitutionally authorised to supply the deficiency in the executive government. This conduct alarmed the friends of British connexion, as it seemed to furnish a precedent for separation. The king's recovery checked the rising fears; but the irregularity of the procedure could not be forgotten.

By some of the members who influenced the decision of the parliament on this memorable occasion, a whig club was instituted for the promotion of political reform, while the aristocratic leaders in a great measure regained their power. The latter concurred in several bills for the extension of the popular interest in the legislature, and also assented to some measures for the relief of the catholics, who, in consideration of the peaceable demeanor of the greater part of their number, were permitted to exercise their religion and hold property without

without restriction, to practise the law, vote at parliamentary elections, and enjoy various offices civil and military. These gratifications did not fully content the sect, as the chief employments under the crown were still withheld, and the privilege of sitting in parliament was not conceded.

Before these relaxations of the rigor of law, a new society had been organised, under the appellation of the United Irishmen. The entire emancipation of the catholics, and a reform of the parliamentary system, were the ostensible aims of this association; but its real object was the erection of a republican fabric on the ruins of the old constitution. The intrigues of its members at length produced a rebellion; and the peril to which the two nations were thus exposed, enforced, beyond the influence of any speculative advice, the experiment of legislative consolidation.

HISTORY
OF THE
U N I O N
OF
GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

CHAP. I.

View of the Motives for a strict Union—Rise of the Society of United Irishmen—Progress of traitorous Machinations—Suppression of the Rebellion—Proposal of a legislative Union in the British Cabinet—Pamphlets on the Subject—Meetings in Ireland.

THE French revolution, if not the primary cause, was an accelerating motive to the substitution of a close union for the imperfect connexion between the British and Hibernian realms. In a time of profound peace, such a coalition, whatever advantages it might seem to promise, might have been neglected and postponed from indolence or indifference; but, when the rashness of political empiricism, and the impolicy of the chief potentates of Europe, had propagated the miseries of war to an alarming extent, and had excited strong apprehensions of the forcible dissolution of ancient ties and the subversion of former establishments, the danger of a total loss of connexion with Ireland

roused

roused the British ministry to all the vigor of exertion. A measure that was before recommended by considerations of expediency, which will not always operate with sufficient influence, became, at so critical a period, an object of imperious necessity. No medium offered itself, to the minds of the reflecting politicians of either country, between the evils of hostile separation and the benefits of incorporative union.

Principles of polity, founded on the supposed rights of man, are calculated to make a strong impression on the mass of the people in every state, as they address themselves to the feelings and the passions rather than to the understanding or the judgement: but, in a country where oppression, we might almost say, was the order of the day with regard to the major part of the inhabitants—where the peasants were involved in the extremity of want and wretchedness, exposed to the contempt of their superiors and to the brutality of the unprincipled agents of haughty or negligent landlords—where an unnatural separation subsisted between the rulers of the state and the bulk of the community—where the people, we may add, were exceedingly ignorant and credulous—such doctrines were likely to meet with extraordinary encouragement, and to operate with peculiar force.

Some enterprising mal-contents * began to propagate Jacobinical notions in Ireland, with studious eagerness, in 1791; and the society of United Irishmen then originated: but its influence was checked, and its progress retarded, by a dread of the power of the British government. For some years its operations were conducted

* Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Theobald Wolfe Tone, Hamilton Rowan, Dr. Mac-Nevin, &c.

with caution and secrecy, so as merely to excite suspicions of intrigue and machination. When the hopes which the catholics had conceived of a speedy and full emancipation were disappointed by the recall of earl Fitzwilliam, whose liberal views were obstructed by the aristocratic faction, the association gained ground among those sectaries, but not so rapidly as its leaders wished. Continuing their efforts during the vice-royalty of earl Camden, the emissaries of sedition strengthened the party, in 1796, by considerable accessions in the northern counties; and an urgent application was made to the French government for military aid. In the mean time, the implements of warfare were procured in abundance, and tactics were diligently studied by these enemies of their country, whose intentions now became so manifest, that numerous bodies of yeomanry were armed and disciplined for the defence of the state. An armament sailed from France to assist the Hibernian traitors; but the meditated invasion was prevented by tempestuous weather. To repress the attempts of the conspirators, the army began, in the following year, to enforce the dispersion of tumultuous assemblies without waiting for directions from the magistrates; the inhabitants of Ulster were disarmed; and the parliament endeavoured, by coercive statutes, to aid the exertions of the soldiery. These proceedings had some effect in restoring tranquillity to that province; and Connaught remained free from commotion; but, in the two other provinces, the mal-contents prosecuted an alarming course of depredation and outrage. The increase of these practices drew from the government, in the spring of the year 1798, a proclamation which asserted the existence of rebellion, and ordered the troops to act with the utmost vigor for its suppression.

After

After the attack upon Naas, the severities of martial law were denounced not only against the rebel combatants, but against all those who should in any manner assist them. The king's troops being actively supported by the militia and yeomanry, the insurgents were routed in various conflicts. The military reputation of the marquis Cornwallis, who was appointed lord-lieutenant during these commotions, tended to discourage the rebels: the summary condemnation and execution of many of the prisoners concurred to intimidate the rest; and the offer of pardon to the penitent contributed to the dissolution of the confederacy. A body of French invaders were compelled to submit, and ships containing a considerable reinforcement were seasonably captured.

A society denominated (in honor of king William III.) the Orange club, labored with sanguinary zeal to check the extension of mercy to the rebels, and to multiply the horrors of capital punishment. But the humanity and good sense of the vice-roy would not suffer him to be guided by those intolerant associates, as the adoption of their advice might have excited a renewal of insurrection.

When the fury of rebellion had subsided, the British ministry deliberated on the best means of preventing a return of commotion, and permanently securing the tranquillity of Ireland. It was probably argued in the cabinet, that not only the peace of that kingdom required a change of system, but that an improvement of the connexion was necessary to prevent Britain herself from being endangered by the efforts of the enemy for a disjunction of the realms; that the act of annexion, the use of the great seal of Britain for Irish statutes, or

the responsibility of the minister to the British parliament for any proceedings which might impair the superiority or the influence of the greater state, could not preclude the risque of factious discord, or of a momentous difference of opinion, which might injure the aggregate interest, or deeply wound the vitals of the empire; and that a measure which had been recommended at various times by many enlightened men—namely, the union of the two parliaments—seemed to offer the most efficacious remedy for the disorders by which Ireland had long been harassed, and the best provision for general strength and security.

As soon as it was known that an incorporative union was in agitation, the party which, in the vulgar political phraseology, had *made a job* of the government, and had frequently constrained the British cabinet to submit to its will, felt an extraordinary alarm, foreseeing the loss or the decline of its power from the transfer of the parliament of Ireland to another country, and from other circumstances of the intended change. Some of its members, however, were won to an acquiescence by the persuasions and promises of the premier. In the Irish cabinet, one of the ministers declared his unwillingness to concur in the proposal. This was sir John Parnell, chancellor of the exchequer, who, for his opposition to the wish of the majority, was dismissed from his office. One of the heads of the law, Mr. Fitzgerald the prime serjeant, having acknowledged his repugnance to an union, was also desired to resign his station. Mr. Isaac Corry, who, having formerly been noticed among the anti-ministerial members of parliament as a man of ability, had been introduced into office under the administration of the marquis

marquis of Buckingham, was now promoted to the financial post; and the other vacancy was supplied by Mr. Saint-George Daly.

When the king and his chief ministers had formed the resolution of proposing an union, a pamphlet *, attributed to Mr. Edward Cooke, the under-secretary for the civil department, was published at Dublin, with a view of recommending the measure to general support. As it was prepared in concert with the leaders of administration, and was calculated to exhibit their object and intentions, it may be considered as a kind of official proclamation, and therefore claims more extended notice than the ordinary effusions of the political press.

The writer first stated the question in the abstract: 'Two independent states, finding their separate existence mutually inconvenient, propose to form themselves into one state for their mutual benefit.' He proceeded to apply the remark to the Hibernian realm. 'If the liberty, the conveniences, the happiness, the security of the people of Ireland, will be improved by an incorporation of the Irish with the British legislature, shall we not for such advantages endeavour to procure that incorporation?'—He then inquired in what cases an union was likely to be most advantageous. If one of the states desirous of coalescing should be inferior 'in point of civilisation, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, morals, manners, establishments, constitution,' and the other state should surpass all the world in these advantages, an union might be expected to prove more beneficial to the former; and on this ground

* Entitled, 'Arguments for and against an Union between Great-Britain and Ireland, considered.'

he argued, that Ireland, when it should be identified with Great-Britain in government, in policy, in interest, would gradually rise to a par with England, and would thus derive essential benefit from the measure. If there were no other reasons which could render the union of the sister kingdoms desirable, the state of Europe, he said, and especially of France, seemed to point out its peculiar policy at the present day. As the French had subdued many considerable countries, and extended their influence over others, the strength of the British empire required speedy augmentation, that the progress of rival power might be checked.

Though the two kingdoms were united under one sovereign, yet, as they had separate legislatures, they had, he said, all the disadvantages without the advantages of an union. The king must reside in one of the realms: *there* would of course be the metropolis of the empire; *there* would be the real seat of the government; thence would flow all the counsels; and thither would resort those who might wish for favor and emolument. The other kingdom, being destitute of such advantages, and injured by the absence of many of its principal subjects, would be in a perpetual state of jealousy and discontent, and would be a prey to foreign faction. An empire thus composed would never be in a state of full security, as there never would be a certainty that both parts of it would pursue the same system.

With regard to other circumstances of the state of Ireland, he observed, that nine tenths of its property were in the hands of British descendants, though these composed only one fourth of the nation in point of number; that they professed the protestant religion, while the posterity of the original inhabitants maintained

tained the doctrines of the church of Rome ; that the creed of the former was the established religion of the state ; that the catholics had long been subjected to a severe code of laws, which, however, had in the present reign been almost entirely repealed ; that, not content with complete toleration, they demanded political equality with the protestants, and such an alteration in the constitution of parliament, as would give their numbers proportional sway ; but that the chief possessors of the property of the country opposed these claims, apprehending the ruin of their power from the superior number of their religious adversaries, on the removal of all restrictions. For such apprehension, he said, they had reasonable grounds, as the effects of an acquiescence in the adduced claims would be a repeal of the parliamentary test, and of the act of supremacy and uniformity, an abandonment of the defence of the protestant church, a reform of the house of commons, and a revolution of power. If, amidst the assertion of the catholic claims, the separate constitution should continue, the kingdom would remain in a state of great irritation and of frequent alarm ; but, by an incorporation with Britain, the catholics would lose the advantage of the argument of numbers, and Ireland would be in a *natural* situation, having a very great majority in favor of the establishment. It might be said, that they would strongly oppose such a change ; but, he thought, it would not be unfavorable to them, though it would secure the interest of their protestant adversaries. It would perpetuate the toleration which they enjoyed and the powers which had been conceded to them, diminish local prejudices against them, render the partiality of the government toward their rivals less necessary, and improve their condition

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by a diffusion of agricultural and commercial benefits ; and an opening might be left in any plan of union, for their admission to additional privileges, without which, however, they would retain ' a much greater degree of toleration than protestants had ever enjoyed under a catholic state.' He added, that, as a modus for tithes would accompany an union, both the catholics and the protestant dissenters would be ' essentially relieved and benefited.'

Many of the peers, he allowed, would be exposed by the change to a diminution of parliamentary rights ; but ' all personal privileges and prerogatives would remain to them,' and permanent security would be given to their titles and their properties. Similar reasoning was applicable to the candidates for seats in the house of commons ; and, though the professors of the law might not be pleased at being ' deprived of the parliamentary market for their abilities and ambition,' they would be at leisure to pursue a more direct road to professional eminence.

The men of landed property would profit by the confirmed safety of the country ; the merchants would be upon an equality with those of Britain ; the chief manufacture of Ireland, that of linen, would be secured for ever ; British capital would be transferred to that country ; and the condition of the lower classes would be considerably improved.

For the refutation of various objections which had been urged, he argued, that the competency of parliament might be inferred from the nature of an institution framed for the general good ; that the measure would not derogate from the real dignity, independence, or interest of Ireland, as she would become a part of a flourishing nation, as her members would have a proper

proper influence on the deliberations of the imperial parliament, as her liberties would be commensurate with those of Great-Britain, and her interests the same; that a separate parliament had been sufficiently tried, and found inadequate to the task of securing the happiness of the people; that the inconvenience of sending representatives to England would be over-balanced even by a small portion of the benefits derivable from legislative incorporation; that the arrangements of finance for Ireland would be equitably suited to her situation and powers; and, upon the whole, that an union was recommended by this advantage—it might be the salvation, it could not be the ruin, of the country.

Mr. Cooke's pamphlet, as might have been expected, produced many professed replies; and from this time to the decision of the question in parliament, a great number of publications appeared on both sides. Among the most plausible pamphlets against the measure we may reckon that which was written by Mr. Richard Jebb. This author contended, that a resident parliament was best calculated for the preservation of the rights and the maintenance of the interests of Ireland; that the superintending care and vigilance of such a legislature had been signally useful in detecting the late conspiracy, and baffling the schemes of the malcontents; that, though the different conduct pursued in the case of the regency proved the possibility of an occasional disagreement between the parliaments of the two realms, the recurrence of such a dispute was very improbable, and might be obviated by an authoritative declaration of both legislatures, providing for the constant identity of the regents of the two countries; that it was absurd to annihilate a parliament from mere apprehensions of discord, when the motives and reasons
for

for a general union of sentiment were strong and commanding; that the small influence which Ireland would enjoy in an united parliament would expose her to the risque both of political and commercial oppression; and that a kingdom now independent would thus become a cipher in the government, a degraded appendage to the pride of a more flourishing state. Other points were discussed by the same writer; but his arguments were not so irrefragable as to produce full conviction in the minds of his readers.

The gentlemen of the bar, who have great influence in Ireland, took an early opportunity of signifying their disapprobation of an union. On the 9th of December, 1798, they met at Dublin; and Mr. Saurin took the lead as a speaker. He maintained, that, from the particular state and circumstances of Ireland, no country ever had greater occasion for the indulgent care and watchful zeal of a resident parliament; that, in the event of an incorporation, whenever the interests of Great-Britain might happen to clash with those of Ireland, the inferior country would be injured; that her burthens would be enormously augmented; that the change threatened disadvantages that would overbalance the expected benefits; and that the time was very unfavorable for the calm discussion of such a proposal; when the effects of an alarming rebellion were recent, and martial law was still exercised in various parts of the agitated island. He then moved, that a legislative union with Britain should be declared to be 'an innovation, which it would be highly dangerous and improper to propose at the present juncture.' Mr. Spencer, Mr. Burrowes, and other barristers, condemned the idea of an union, as tending to the oppression of Ireland; and, though several speakers argued strongly in

in its favor, the motion was adopted by a great majority. The attorneys afterwards met, and unanimously voted a similar resolution.

The magistrates and common-council of Dublin manifested an equal disinclination to the measure; and the most respectable bankers and merchants of that city declared their abhorrence of all attempts to deprive the Irish 'of their constitutional right and immediate power of legislating for themselves.' The fellows of Trinity-college, and such of the students as enjoyed scholarships, had also a meeting, the result of which was a request that the representatives of the university would oppose with firmness the ministerial project.

The gentry and freeholders of the county of Dublin met for the same purpose, at the beginning of the year 1799; and, having applauded the constitution of 1782, protested against an union as 'hostile to the rights, liberties, and independence of Ireland.' The freeholders of the county of West-Meath likewise declared against it, as it appeared to them to be calculated to 'exhaust Ireland, and debase her from her consequence and prosperity,' and to increase the influence of the court in a formidable degree.

The resolutions of a meeting at Galway were particularly strong; reprobating the attempts of the unionists as unconstitutional and arbitrary; denying the power of the representatives of the people to vote away the independence of the realm; condemning the transfer of the right of legislation to any foreign country, without the general consent of the people, as equivalent to a dissolution of the existing government, and as a procedure which, from its tendency to anarchy, ought to be resisted; and stigmatising, as enemies to their country, all the supporters of such a measure.

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One of the chief anti-unionists was Mr. Foster, a politician of distinguished abilities, who had strenuously promoted the commercial settlement of the year 1785. As he had at that time contended for an union of interests, it was surprising that he should so warmly oppose a legislative coalition ; but, if he was not influenced by pride and ambition, he perhaps conceived that Ireland would flourish more under the care of a parliament intimately acquainted with her wants and wishes, than under the authority of a legislature in which her representatives would be so out-numbered as to sink into insignificance. He publicly professed, among his constituents in the shire of Louth, his decided repugnance to the new project ; and the majority of the freeholders of that county threw their weight into the same scale.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The King's Recommendation of an Improvement of the Connexion between Ireland and Britain—Debates of the Irish Peers—Success of the Anti-Unionists in the House of Commons.

AMIDST the clamor which was excited by the idea of union, while the general voice seemed to reject it with indignation, and language of the boldest kind, even bordering on defiance and sedition, was poured forth in almost every company, the parliament of the realm assembled.

In the speech with which the lord-lieutenant opened the session, he observed that a spirit of disaffection still prevailed, which 'required the exercise of extraordinary powers to check its malignant effects.' But nothing, he thought, could more effectually heal the disorders of the realm than an union with Great-Britain. 'The more (he said) I have reflected on the situation and circumstances of this kingdom, considering on the one hand the strength and stability of Great-Britain, and on the other those divisions which have shaken Ireland to its foundation, the more anxious I am for some permanent adjustment which may extend the advantages enjoyed by our sister kingdom to every part of this island. The unremitting industry with which our enemies persevere in their avowed design of endeavouring to effect a separation of this kingdom from Great-Britain, must have engaged your particular attention; and his majesty commands me to express his anxious hope,

hope, that this consideration, joined to the sentiment of mutual affection and common interest, may dispose the parliaments in both kingdoms to provide the most effectual means of maintaining and improving a connexion essential to their common security, and of consolidating as far as possible, into one firm and lasting fabric, the strength, the power, and the resources of the British empire.'

The conclusion of the vice-roy's speech gave rise to debates in both houses. That which occurred among the peers, however, was less animated and interesting than that of the commons. When a responsive address was proposed, the viscount POWERSCOURT professed himself an enemy to that species of connexion which involved a legislative union, as he was convinced that it would be injurious to Ireland. He therefore moved an amendment, which, while it expressed the wish of the house for a continuance of connexion with Great-Britain, and a strong desire of improving it consistently with the freedom and independence of Ireland, intimated a doubt of the competence of parliament for the completion of an incorporative union.

The earl of BELLAMONT spoke in favor of the amendment, except that part which called in question parliamentary competence, and which he requested the mover to withdraw. The viscount was willing to give up this part of the motion; but those who were unfriendly to the whole would not suffer him to subtract any part of it. On this point a division ensued; and it was determined by 46 votes against 19, that the disputed paragraph should not be withdrawn. The question was then put on the whole amendment; and the house decreed its rejection. The earl of Bellamont, omitting the point of competence, proposed another amendment

amendment adverse to an union; but it was opposed by the chancellor, the archbishop of Armagh, lord Yelverton, and other speakers; and only 17 peers voted for it, while 35 gave their suffrages for the unaltered address.

When an address of thanks had been moved in the house of commons, sir JOHN PARNELL rose, to reprobate the ministerial scheme while it was yet *in embryo*. A copious account of the debate which arose on that occasion would fill a large volume: but, as it was general and preliminary, and as the result was deemed equivalent to a refusal of discussion, the reader will probably be content with a summary view of the proceedings of the assembly.

The baronet declared that he was extremely unwilling to object to an address expressive of the attachment of the house to the sovereign or to British connexion; but that, as it alluded to a momentous and hazardous change in the constitution of the realm, he could not refrain from intimating his early disapprobation. It contained a proposition which, though veiled under the captivating appearance of merely adding strength and security to the empire, represented the annihilation of the Irish parliament as expedient for the general interest. He would not tamely allow such an idea to receive the approbation of parliament by a side wind. As far as he could judge of the scheme from what he already knew of it, he believed it to be adverse to the permanent interest of Ireland, and inconsistent with the rights of the people—rights which, having been delegated to the patriotic care of the parliament, ought not to be resigned or surrendered by a representative body. It would affect the constitution, the trade, the property of the country; and perhaps the

the general happiness of mankind might be involved in its consequences. No one, he thought, could doubt that a legislative union would effect a change in the constitution. Could it be doubted, when, instead of an addition to the amount of members, correspondent with the increase of population, the proportion was to be diminished, and thus an anti-reform measure was to be substituted for that change in the representation which so many persons deemed necessary for preserving the spirit of the constitution? Could it be doubted, when the legislature of Ireland was to be merged in that of Great-Britain, and the concerns of the former country were to be intrusted to the care of men who would not be its representatives, who would have different interests, and would be too prejudiced and too remote to conduct its affairs with strict justice, or propriety? What would an Englishman say, if Ireland should propose to him the suppression of one half of the number of the representatives of his country, and the substitution of Irishmen for them? Would he be satisfied with an intimation, that his country would be as well represented by Irish as by English members? Yet even this would be a much fairer proposal than that which was now made to Ireland. The peace of Europe had already been disturbed by the dispute relative to the proportion between the number of constituents and representatives: it therefore might be thought imprudent to set that question now afloat among the people of Ireland. Indeed, he would not have referred to it if it had not been forced upon him by the speech and the address; but, as it was thus obtruded, it might be less dangerous to agitate it in parliament than to suffer the public to discuss it without authority or assistance.

Having

Having stated his objections to the measure in a constitutional point of view, he adverted to its probable effects on commerce. By occasioning the absence of a great number of the nobility and gentry, it would diminish in a serious degree the consumption of the country; and, while it would lessen the import trade it would also affect the exportation of commodities: The advantages which it promised to particular places would by no means compensate the general mischief which would result from a diminution of capital and consumption. The commerce of Ireland was rapidly advancing; and, as its increase was one of the consequences of the established system, a change would be highly inexpedient.

Now, he then asked, would the proposed union affect the peace or strength of the country? Answering his own question, he affirmed that it would lay a foundation for discontent; and that, as the system would be permanent, its effect on the tranquillity of the country would be progressively prejudicial. In such a state, public strength would necessarily be impaired.

One argument which seemed to favor the scheme was, that a similar measure had proved advantageous to Scotland. But that country, when she acceded to an union with England, was in circumstances very different from those in which Ireland now stood. Scotland was subjected to the alternative either of accepting the offer, or of exposing herself to a warmth of resentment which, weak as she was, might terminate in her ruin: Ireland was much less liable to injury from a refusal of compliance. As the Scots menaced England with a separation, an union was more necessary for securing the two crowns to the same sovereign, than it would be in the case of Ireland, whose crown was

connected with that of Great-Britain by indissoluble ties. Having mentioned some other points of difference, he proceeded to obviate an argument drawn from the supposed distresses of Ireland. It had been said, that, as the country was in a bad state, and an union could hardly make it worse, the measure at least deserved a trial. To this he replied, that it would be rash to give a sick man a potion which might be fatal, merely because his case was already dangerous.

The Irish parliament, it was said, had manifested a want of wisdom, and had shown itself to be subservient to sinister influence; but he observed that it would be very unjust, on such pretences, to destroy the constitution, and that the two houses had an opportunity of disproving the latter charge in particular by a rejection of the present proposal.

That an union would secure the country against invasion, he denied; for a foreign enemy would not be deterred by an act of parliament; and the people, incensed at being forced into the measure, would be less eager to resist invaders.

After other remarks, he recommended the strict observance of an old declaration, substituting Ireland for England—*Nolumus leges HIBERNIÆ mutari*; and exhorted his countrymen to maintain a friendly connexion with Great-Britain, without adopting an unconstitutional system, which seemed rather to portend mischief than to promise advantage.

Mr. TIGHE, considering a part of the address as in some measure pledging the house to the support of an union, was unwilling to agree to it. But lord CASTLE-REAGH assured him, that an acquiescence in the address did not involve an approbation of legislative union. It only promised, he said, that the house would deliberate

deliberate on the best means of improving the connexion between the kingdoms, and augmenting the energy of the empire. That these desirable ends would be most effectually secured by an incorporation of the realms, he was fully persuaded; but the members who might vote for the address, would not be bound to give their sanction to his opinion.

MR. GEORGE PONSONBY, a barrister of high reputation, opposed in strong terms the idea of a legislative union, as a scheme that would injure the prosperity and destroy the liberties of Ireland. He denied the competency of the legislature to the adoption of a measure invasive of the rights of the people, and subversive of the constitution of the country. But, even if it had an undoubted right to exercise such power, it would, he contended, be the height of folly to make such a sacrifice to the pride of Britain, or trust to the liberality of a nation which had treated the Irish with glaring injustice. What influence, he asked, would 100 representatives of Ireland have in an assembly in which were 558 British members? Far from having any weight, they would be mere ciphers in the legislature, and would be constrained to submit on every occasion to the dictates of a haughty and powerful majority.

He quoted various instances of the illiberal conduct of England toward the sister kingdom, and affirmed that for six centuries the Irish had been precluded, by a series of oppression, from the full enjoyment of those advantages with which nature had apparently blessed them. He deprecated the subjection of his country to the sway of a British parliament, and declared his strong wishes for the preservation of that legislative independence which had obviously promoted the prosperity of the realm. If he conceived that an incor-

poration of the parliaments would add strength to the empire, and render the whole state more flourishing, he was ready to give his assent to the coalition; but, as he thought it degrading and detrimental to Ireland, and more likely to disunite and weaken than to strengthen the two countries, he could not refrain from menacing it with his determined hostility. He also condemned the means that were used for its promotion, particularly alluding to the dismissal of sir John Parnell; an example which would deter every possessor of office from a disclosure of his conscientious opinion, if it should happen to be adverse to the views of the court. He concluded with moving, as an amendment to the address, that the house should declare its resolution of maintaining the right of the people of Ireland to a resident and independent legislature, as recognised by the British parliament in 1782, and finally settled at the adjustment of all differences between the two countries.

Mr. CONOLLY dissented from this motion, for the reason which he had urged against the constitution of 1782; namely, the absurdity of having two independent legislatures in one empire, which he compared to two heads on one pair of shoulders. Many of the evils of Ireland, he was convinced, had arisen from this source; yet the independence was not so substantial as it was said to be; for there had been at one time, since the year above-mentioned, 116 placemen and pensioners in the house of commons.

Mr. FITZGERALD thought himself bound to differ from those with whom he had lately acted, as his reason and conscience forbade him to vote away the constitution of his country, or the liberties and property of his countrymen. He thanked God that on this occasion he

he was free, not being one of the numerous body of placemen and pensioners who were expected to gratify the minister with a surrender of the birth-right and freedom of the Irish to the demands of Great-Britain. He then took a survey of the question in two points of view—the competency of parliament, and the expediency of the measure. Neither the peers nor the commons could abdicate their own rights; much less were they lawfully empowered to vote away the rights of the people. The Scots had been more fairly treated in this respect than the Irish would be, if an union should be formally proposed in this session; for the legislature of the northern realm had been convoked with public notice of the grand scheme which was in agitation, whereas that of Ireland was summoned without previous intimation of the intended project. To precipitate an union in this way would be to promote a dissolution of the government—it would indeed be a revolutionary measure of the most dangerous kind.—The expediency or eligibility of the scheme he was inclined to doubt; and he thought there was some foundation for the remark of Dr. Johnson, who, in conversation with an Irishman, said, ‘Do not unite with us, sir; for, if you do, we shall rob you as we robbed the Scotch!’ An union was not necessary to tranquillise the country; for the activity and courage of the loyal citizens and provincials had in a great measure effected that object, and would soon complete the work. It was not requisite for preventing a separation of the two crowns, as the law sufficiently guarded against that misfortune. An ulterior arrangement of some imperial concerns might perhaps be expedient; but this might be concerted without an incorporation, and without

leaving the interests of Ireland at the mercy of a British cabinet.

Mr. FITZGERALD of Kerry totally differed from the late prime-serjeant. He maintained the necessity of an union from the disordered state of Ireland and the great risque of a separation; and, on the point of parliamentary competency, he contended that such a power could not be denied without elevating beyond due bounds the authority of the people.

Mr. LEE was convinced that the sacrifice of the Irish constitution would not promote the tranquillity or welfare of the country, but would, on the contrary, produce alarming discontent, and fan the flames of rebellion. If the minister should attempt to enforce such a surrender, language would hardly afford a name sufficiently expressive of his crime. Even already, he had resorted to fraud and force—to fraud, in discarding the old servants of the crown, because they were unwilling to violate their conscience—to force, in the introduction of a foreign army for the purpose of over-awing the people. If he should persist in such conduct, he would not find the Irish tame or passive: they would defend their liberties with hardihood and vigor; and, if they should be in want of aid, they might easily obtain it from the rulers of the French republic, who would be pleased with an opportunity of wounding Britain through Ireland. This was an extremity against which the former kingdom ought scrupulously to guard. As there were apparently some radical errors in the system of Irish government, they ought to be examined and corrected; or the seeds of discontent might fructify for ever. The British nation ought also to be particularly on its guard against the introduction of a body of Irish members,

members, as the minister, by the addition of this *corps* to his company of Scots and his party of sepoys, might be enabled to overwhelm all remains of opposition.

He was proud of being one of the first who opposed this unjustifiable measure. If he should be blamed for having resisted it without knowing the terms, he would answer that he cared not about specific articles, when there was such a degree of turpitude in the thing itself, that no terms could reconcile it to his conscience or his feelings. It was a question of principle, not of terms. How were the conditions to be adjusted? How could the liberty of a nation be appreciated? Could its value be determined by arithmetic, or measured by a gauging-rod?

He declared it to be his opinion (and he staked his professional character on the justness of the remark) that the parliament was not competent to the change which it was desired to enact. The constitution, in an affair of this magnitude, required an appeal to the public; and nothing but the will of the people, signified in new elections of representatives, could give the legislature the authority necessary for the extraordinary occasion.

Mr. SAINT-GEORGE DALY vindicated the competency of the parliament to the enactment of a measure of this kind, though he allowed that it had no authority to violate the rights of the people. An union, he said, would not annul or infringe their rights; and it was the only settlement that promised to heal the distractions of the country.

Mr. BARRINGTON, in declaiming against an union, gave way to such a freedom of reflexion, that he was repeatedly called to order; but he continued his bold career in defiance of all interruption. The secretary had

had recommended the most dispassionate coolness, and had supported his advice by example; but the present speaker observed, that, though such behaviour might become the assailant of liberty, it was not very appropriate to her defender, and that he who could argue with apathy against a daring attempt to violate a free constitution, must be more or less than man. He had been duped into a support of some less important measures of the cabinet; but, on this occasion, he thought it his duty to oppose the court with vigor and perseverance. The house was not competent to discuss the question thus smuggled on its consideration; and, even if it were, the means which had been used to influence the votes of members would preclude the legality of its decision, by preventing it from speaking the sense of the people. Neither the parliament nor the country had had fair play. Letters had been written to obstruct provincial meetings: the inhabitants of the commercial towns had been deceived by misrepresentations; and, while menaces were thrown out by the emissaries and hirelings of the court, promises and artful insinuations were employed in their turn. Indeed, the business was a tissue of meanness and iniquity.

He accused the ministers of having checked the rising prosperity of the country; and affirmed that they had stimulated two sects or parties to mutual attacks, in the hope of rendering both too weak to withstand the arbitrary views of the cabinet. It was not merely their purpose, he added, to destroy the constitution of Ireland: they wished also to annihilate the liberties of Great-Britain. They pretended that an incorporation of the realms would extend the trade and augment the accommodations and the happiness of the Irish; but this was a delusive assertion, and the consequences

would be the reverse of the statement. The hint of such a scheme was an insult to the house; and he trusted that the people, forgetting all political and religious differences, would unite to baffle the aims of unprincipled and profligate statesmen. The example of North-America would teach them how to act, if the measure should be pressed in repugnance to their inclinations.

Mr. DOBBS acknowledged, that, when the project was started, he was dazzled with the advantages which its patrons held out, and was disposed to sacrifice his ideas of national pride to what he conceived to be the national interest: but, when he had maturely considered the subject, and had weighed the arguments adduced on both sides, he was convinced that the scheme did not merit the favorable notice of the Irish, and that, even if it should prove less injurious to them than he had reason to think it would be, he and his representative brethren could not be justified in surrendering the rights of their constituents and of posterity, and transferring the parliament to another country.

Mr. G. KNOX, in florid language, opposed the discussion of a question so dishonorable and prejudicial to Ireland, and fulminated his anathemas against all who should promote the execrable measure.

Lord CASTLEREAGH thought it unnecessary to particularise the advantages which an union promised to Ireland and to the empire, as a detail would at this time be premature. He affected to be surprised at the high tone assumed by the speakers of opposition, at the illiberality of their reflexions, and at the weakness of their reasoning. What, he asked, were the objects of the measure but such as must excite the approbation of every loyal subject and the applause of every

every patriot? To tranquillise and improve Ireland, and consolidate the strength and glory of the empire, were the real aims of its projectors, who deserved to be hailed by public gratitude, rather than attacked by malice and calumny. The miseries of the country were indisputably great; and, for want of a speedy remedy, it might even be ruined. Its state and government exhibited no fixed principles on which the human mind could rest, no one standard to which its different prejudices could be accommodated. Without an union, it might become a province of France: at present, it was seemingly independent, but required, for its protection against foreign and domestic foes, a British army which it had not the means to support. It had not the benefit of the English constitution, which, indeed, was incompatible with the state of the connexion; for that constitution did not recognise separate and independent legislatures under one crown. By an incorporation with Britain, a common interest would be established; and the welfare of one country would be that of the other. Religious dissensions would be allayed; jealousy and prejudice would subside; trade would greatly flourish; a respectable set of men between the landlord and the mere peasant would arise; and the morals of the lowest class would be improved. The increase of the number of absentees, and other incidental inconveniences, would be of very trifling import, compared with the safety and prosperity that would result from the measure.

He did not expect to hear, from constitutional lawyers, the allegation of parliamentary incompetence. It was clear to him, that a legislative body was at all times competent to the adoption of the most effectual means of promoting the general welfare. For that purpose

purpose the parliament was instituted; and, as an union was calculated for such an object, without violating the principles of the constitution, the denial of competency might justly be exploded.

Mr. PLUNKET, from the desponding looks and feeble voices of those gentlemen who sought to annihilate the parliament of Ireland, conceived strong hopes of the failure of their attacks. He was confident that the majority would spurn at a proposition which tended to degrade and enslave the country. Every unprejudiced observer, he said, would see it in its true light, and would reprobate the unwarrantable means to which the government had resorted for the promotion of an 'abominable measure.' Its supposed advantages were very disputable, while its disadvantages were certain. Even if an act should pass in its favor, it would be 'a mere nullity, and no man in Ireland would be bound to obey it.' If the constitution should be much less altered than it would be by a conjunction of the two legislatures, the representative trust would be violated, and the people, in the sanctuary of whose will the parliament was enshrined, might resume their original rights. This was not an unauthorised suggestion, but was a doctrine which might be found in the records of the Revolution.

Mr. OGLE considered it as the duty of a delegate not to disobey the instructions of his constituents, on questions of great moment, and declared that he would resign his seat rather than vote for an union against the inclinations of those who had deputed him to parliament. On the present occasion, his opinion was correspondent with the sentiments which they entertained. He approved the constitution of the year 1782, and would not consent to its surrender; and he protested,

protested, that, if the new scheme should not find an early grave in the spirit, the honor, and the integrity of the Irish parliament, he would oppose it in all its stages with inflexible perseverance.

Mr. HARDY censured the proposal of union as illiberal, base, and wicked; condemned the political chemistry of those who, endeavouring to extract a deadly poison from the fairest and most healthy subjects, could see nothing in the freedom acquired in 1782, but the power of surrendering it in 1799; denied the competency of the parliament to give sanction to an act so glaringly unconstitutional; and declared that he could only foresee misery and servitude to Ireland from the completion of the scheme now recommended.

Mr. COREY, the new minister of finance, observed, that, if the house should by its address agree to take the royal speech into consideration, no member would be pledged to a particular opinion or decision upon any of the subjects which it mentioned. The idea of a legislative union was honestly avowed; but every one would remain at full liberty to oppose it. Perhaps the silence of the greater part of the nation might proceed from a desire of hearing the opinion of this enlightened assembly; why then should the house adopt an amendment which would preclude the knowledge of its sentiments? He then panegyrised the English constitution, and expatiated on the advantages of that consolidation of Ireland with Great-Britain which would admit the former country to all its blessings.

Mr. PEARSON, in replying to the advocates of the ministerial scheme, denied the applicability of the case of Scotland (which had been triumphantly adduced as a precedent), as the inhabitants of that country, when an union was offered to them, were subject to an arbitrary

arbitrary parliament which they had no interest in supporting, and were, in other respects, in such a state that they could not be injured by the measure. He combated various arguments of the unionists with spirit, if not with complete success; and conjured the house to adopt no arrangements but those which would secure the honor and independence of Ireland.

Many other speeches were delivered in the course of this debate, the duration of which exceeded twenty hours. The contest was so close, that only a majority of one appeared against the amendment, the numbers being 106 and 105; and, when the question was put for agreeing to the address, the ministry had 107 votes against 105.

During this spirited debate, the avenues to the house were crowded with people, who long remained on the rack of suspense. When the result was known, it was hailed as a victory on the part of the anti-unionists; and the metropolis resounded with acclamations. The leaders of opposition, elevated with hope, prepared for another conflict, which, they did not doubt, would give them a decisive superiority.

The address was reported two days afterwards*; and, when that part which related to an union was read, sir LAURENCE PARSONS strongly opposed it. He had hoped that the opinions lately expressed in the house would have occasioned a dereliction of the proposal; but, as the ministry resolved to persist in it, he was glad that such pertinacity afforded an opportunity to those gentlemen who had supported the measure on a former night, to retrieve their characters from the disgrace which they must have incurred by a conduct so hostile to the honor and the liberties of their country. The

* On the 24th of January.

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proposal, he said, arose from a wish on the part of England to recover that dominion over the Irish which she had lost in 1782, and to obtain a power of taxing them without their own consent for the support of the general expences of the empire. The agitation of such a question, he was convinced, would produce more mischief than benefit: it might even prove fatal to British connexion: but he trusted that the ill consequences with which it was pregnant would find an antidote in the spirit and virtue of the house. Two considerations ought to regulate the adoption of any public measure: one was, whether it was intrinsically good; the other, whether it agreed with the temper and disposition of the people. Were these principles included in the present measure? Even if it were a good scheme, it would be impolitic to press it in opposition to the general will; and, if it were bad, the consequences of persistence in it might be dreadful. But, exclaimed the baronet, 'it cannot be carried into effect; for every gentleman in Ireland will sooner part with his life than give up the independence of his country.' [*the house re-echoed with cries of hear! hear!*] 'Let then the scandalous and irritating measure be relinquished; and let the country, panting from its recent struggles and its present alarms, repose at last in tranquillity.'

He then replied to some arguments which had been urged in recommendation of an union. It had been said, that financial poverty rendered the Irish unable to maintain their independence; but this assertion was contradicted by the speech lately delivered from the throne, which had asserted the increase of the wealth and prosperity of the country. A nation which, for more than 600 years, had maintained, while very poor, a resident parliament, surely would not lose by an accumu-

accumulation of wealth, the ability of supporting its legislature.—It had been affirmed that the want of protection from a British armed force rendered an union desirable, and that gratitude for former assistance of that kind called for an acquiescence in the measure. An English force had certainly defended the Irish against foreign enemies: but it was not indisputably manifest that their neighbours had given them any protection against internal foes; and it might be alleged, that Hibernian troops had frequently assisted the English in their wars, so as to render the balance of aid at least equal, if not to make it preponderate in favor of Irish services.

As some had argued, that the commerce of Ireland would be greatly promoted by an union, he contended that its only existing restriction was in the channel trade, which was of little importance; that this had been repeatedly promised without the expectation of such a sacrifice as was now demanded; and, if ministers had any regard for their honor, it would now be granted without an union.

That the evil arising from an increase of the number of absentees would be more than compensated by the influx of British merchants and British capital, and the consequent establishment of a middle class, he did not believe. He saw no inducements for such a transfer, no grounds for expecting such an advantage beyond what which had existed for the last sixteen years; and, in that time, the ascertained rights and increasing commerce of Ireland had not produced these effects.

It had been asserted, that Ireland had sent its representatives to the parliament of England for three successive reigns. If that assertion were strictly true, it would, he said, have no weight in the determination

of the present question. In the reign of Edward III. indeed, the peers and commons of Ireland were desired to attend their sovereign in England; but they did not send a deputation before they had unanimously declared that their compliance with this request should not in any respect derogate from their rights. How could this behaviour be construed into a surrender of independence?

It was represented as incongruous and inconvenient that there should be two independent legislatures under the same crown; but the risque of discordancy was not very alarming; and he was confident that the parliaments of the two countries would ever retain a sufficient share of good sense, and a sufficient regard to their common interests, to agree on imperial questions.

He was astonished at the eagerness of Great-Britain for the ruin of the freedom of Ireland, after the sacrifices already made by the latter kingdom—sacrifices which had given to the former a great extent of influence and authority. Having mentioned the successive attempts of the English government for the complete subjection of Ireland, he remarked the coincidence between the state of that realm at the time of those efforts and on the present occasion. Weakness was, in each instance, the incitement to usurpation.—He concluded with giving his most decided negative to that part of the address which would leave ground for a renewal of attempts on the independence of parliament and the liberties of Ireland.

Lord CASTLEREAGH, without following the baronet through his wide range of observation, made some remarks on the subject. He allowed that ministers did not intend to relinquish the measure, while they had any hope of success: if they should, they would be unworthy

unworthy of the situations which they filled, and might be accused of a disregard to the interests of their country and the empire. The parliament, he hoped, would have too just a sense of its own character, to dismiss a question of such importance without a sober and deliberate discussion. The measure ought not to be sacrificed to the clamors of faction. It was perhaps the first virtue of ministers to maintain a dignified firmness against faction; and, if they should be influenced by cabals, and by wretched *round-robins* of *petty-foggers*, the country might be lost. The dismissal of those who were unfriendly to an union, he added, could not justly be condemned: it was a part of the king's prerogative to determine who should be his servants; and all who endeavoured to counteract a salutary measure deserved to be discarded. — The opposers of the scheme, he said, did not appear to be guided by motives of patriotism or public virtue: party spirit was more prevalent in their minds. Of what members did the phalanx consist? Did they agree in political sentiments? Of what description were the leaders of the body? Some were the abettors of French principles; and with these disaffected men many loyal characters had stooped to a coalition. Such an unnatural confederacy, he trusted, would be unsuccessful. The assertions of such a party respecting an intention of employing the British militia in enforcing the union, and other illiberal charges, might be easily refuted: and no obloquy or calumny should deter him from the prosecution of a beneficial scheme.

MR. GEORGE PONSONBY, in a spirited manner, defended the anti-unionists against the attacks of the secretary, and asserted the uprightness of their intentions. He allowed that men of different political prin-

ciples were to be found among them; but was the constitution of Ireland to be surrendered, because a difference of opinion on some questions subsisted among persons who were unanimous on this? Did it argue a factious zeal to resist an attack upon the independence of the country? Could the respectable members who opposed such an attempt submit to the imputation of a party spirit from a young man, who had nothing to shield him from their contempt but the office which he abused?—He then strongly advised a dereliction of the measure, alleging that not only a sense of patriotism, but also the improbability of success, ought to induce the ministry to renounce it. The energy of public virtue, which had been manifested both in and out of parliament, would, he trusted, baffle the intrigues of the court; but he would not leave it in the power of a minister to renew the practice of unconstitutional arts for the promotion of the scheme. He appealed to those members who had supported the proposition, whether their true interest did not call upon them to retract their assent, and oppose the discussion of a question which violently agitated the public mind. Though he did not believe that the nation would suffer such an unjust scheme to be carried into effect, he wished for a formal and full renunciation of it on the part of government.

Mr. JOHN BERRSFORD professed his desire of an union, as he thought it the best remedy for the miserable condition to which Ireland was reduced by conflicting interests.

Mr. DOBBS wished that the measure might not be discussed, as it appeared at the first glance to be one which no terms could qualify. It would leave every man discontented who was so at present, and add to the
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the number those who seemed now to be satisfied. There were undoubtedly faults in the system of Irish administration; for what but radical errors in the government of a country could prompt 400,000 men to take an oath against its constitution? These errors, however, might be corrected by the existing parliament. It was the duty of the house to search for them, and devise a speedy remedy. This conduct would tend to perpetuate the constitution, which, on the contrary, would be annihilated by the new project. He earnestly exhorted the house to pursue such a course; for he loved the English constitution, though he hated English tyranny, and was a friend to Irish freedom, though he detested sedition.

Mr. J. M. O'DONEL inveighed in warm terms against the ministerial scheme, as degrading and injurious to Ireland, likely to protract discord and embitter the evils of the country, and tending to reduce it to the helpless state of a British province.—The speech of this member was very long; but it did not abound with cogent arguments.

Mr. FITZGERALD spoke chiefly in defence of the Irish professors of the law, whom, he thought, lord Castlereagh had treated illiberally. Not content with drawing from his lordship a declaration that he did not mean to derogate from the honor of that profession, he continued to panegyrise the gentlemen of the bar, and affirmed that they had been highly instrumental in procuring for their country the advantages which she enjoyed.

Mr. EDGEWORTH also vindicated the conduct of the gentlemen of the bar, and particularly denied the applicability of the expression of *round-robin*, which, he said, implied 'a mutinous demand made by men

ashamed to avow themselves the promoters of it.¹ Was this true, he asked, of the individuals who attended the meeting?—Of an union he had at first conceived a favorable idea; but, when he had heard some strong arguments against it, and found it obnoxious to the majority of the nation, he thought it his duty to oppose it. Ireland, he added, was under great obligation to the minister and his friends on this occasion; for by their means it had been shown that she possessed an honest, spirited, and independent bar, and that she had a parliament which, though its members might sometimes be diverted from the strict discharge of their duty, could rouse itself to her defence at an interesting crisis. The spectacle of this night, he trusted, would show, that, whatever defects there might be in the national character, the people of Ireland had warm hearts and sound heads, and that, without an excess of refinement, they possessed good nature, good sense, and staunch honesty.

Sir JOHN PARNELL thought it degrading to the parliament to entertain a question whether it should put an end to its own existence. He animadverted on the absurdity of pretending, as some had affirmed, that it was inconsistent or presumptuous to declare against an union without knowing the terms or understanding the true nature of the question. Could any man, he asked, be so weak as not to know what the question was? It was well known to be this—whether the parliament of Ireland and the independence of the nation should be given up for ever? As the ministers would not bind themselves by a promise to preserve these great objects, the parliament, he hoped, would determine the point, by voting that it would never surrender the legislative independence of the realm. Ireland had abundant

abundant resources ; its treasury was well stored ; its trade was in a flourishing state ; and, whatever had been said to the contrary, it could subsist without the aid of Britain. An union, far from being necessary for the augmentation of the prosperity of the country, would, he feared, have a very different effect.

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH now rose ; and, as he discussed the great question with an ability which his adversaries were constrained to acknowledge, we shall more fully state the substance of his speech than his former political obscurity would otherwise have induced us.

As the British islands formed one empire, not from a temporary and accidental union of their crowns on the same head, but from the constitutional conjunction of their crowns, he argued, *à priori*, that one legislature was better adapted to such a government than two parliaments were ; that the latter system involved, at the first aspect, a dangerous anomaly ; and that an empire thus constituted contained in itself the seeds of contest and of future separation. So far, therefore, as the tendency of union was to limit the British empire to one legislature, its operation, he said, would be to fortify that empire, and destroy those seeds of discord which might otherwise produce a separation. Some might reply, that British influence would operate as an antidote to the mischiefs apprehended, and would prevent legislative dissensions from weakening and tearing asunder the energies of the empire, or Irish independence from checking the views or injuring the interests of Britain. But this supposition, he thought, insultingly derogated from the practical independence of the Irish parliament, which was thus allowed to be subordinate to that of Great-Britain. Where an actual

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subjection thus existed, it might be rendered only the more mischievous and oppressive, by being concealed behind a mask of nominal independence; and the desired antidote would be more effectually found in an union than in a division of legislatures. To an objection, that the paucity of representatives of Ireland in the imperial parliament would leave that country at the mercy of Britain, he replied, that the Irish representation would be commensurate to Irish power, resources, and contribution, and that an unity of interest would secure the rights and the welfare of every part of the empire. If, in the first instance, one legislature would have been desirable for one empire, it would also be now preferable, after Ireland had long possessed a distinct parliament. By obtaining an union upon just and equitable terms, she would exchange her separate legislature for such 'an efficient share in the imperial councils, as would ensure a full participation in the benefits of the British constitution; and she would thus gain all that she would originally have been entitled to demand.' For a change so beneficial, it might be expedient to sacrifice some portion of parade and splendor.

In support of his opinion of the mischief of a double legislature, he instanced the case of the regency, when the lords and commons of Ireland, having nominated a regent for that kingdom, intrusted to him a degree of authority different from, and superior to, that which the British regent would have possessed. This practical assertion of legislative independence tended, he said, to produce 'two independent executives for one empire: it risked intrusting the executive authority to different hands, and set different limits, in each island, to its power.' Did not this act tend to dismember the empire?

empire? The king of England being, *ipso facto* and necessarily, king of Ireland, not only the regent of one realm ought to be regent of the other, but the prerogative of the executive magistrate ought to have precisely the same limits in both countries. The Irish houses of parliament, therefore, violated at that time the spirit of a fundamental maxim of the constitution. It would not be sufficient to say, that the recurrence of this evil might be prevented by a particular statute relative to a state of regency. A mere remedy for a particular mischief would not be generally satisfactory. The source being 'copious enough to be the parent of many mischiefs,' it was highly expedient that it should be completely dried up.—The affair of the commercial propositions might be adduced as another example of the ill effect of legislative distinctness. In consideration of commercial advantages which were to be granted to the Irish, the legislature of Great-Britain required that the parliament of the sister kingdom should adopt such laws as might be prescribed to it for the regulation of certain branches of trade and points of navigation. But the offer was rejected, chiefly on account of this demand; and thus legislative distinctness obstructed the prosperity of Ireland, by dissuading her from an acceptance of considerable benefits, on the only terms on which Britain could be expected to concede them.—The idea of reform suggested another possible mischief. If one of the proposed plans of radical reform had been adopted by the Irish house of commons, the legislature would have been differently constituted from that of Britain; the influence or prerogative of the sovereign would have been different from that which he possessed in England; and the change would have tended to separate the two countries.

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Of the competency of parliament to the enactment of such reform he had never heard any doubts expressed ; and the arguments which, he thought, might be offered against the alleged right were inconclusive, yet perhaps as plausible as any that could be urged against the competency of the legislature to a decree of union. That the authority of the parliament had this extent, he had not the slightest doubt. His opinion, he said, was founded on precedent, on the mischiefs which would result from a contrary doctrine, on the express authority of constitutional writers, and on the genuine principles of the constitution. By enacting an union, parliament would do no more than change (it would not surrender or subvert) the constitution. Ireland, after a legislative incorporation, would be still governed by three estates ; and her inhabitants would enjoy all their privileges unimpaired. If the legislature could remodel the succession to the crown, or change the established religion, it might certainly ordain those alterations which an union would involve. To controvert its right would be to deny the validity of the act for the incorporation of Scotland with England and Wales. On the legitimacy of that act depended the title of his majesty to the crown of the united kingdom ; for the second article of the agreement was the only act of settlement that limited to the house of Hanover, in repugnance to the strict hereditary principle of the Scottish constitution, the succession to that united monarchy which the first article had created.

He observed, that the mischiefs which would attend the impeachment of the Scottish union, were numerous, Scotland, in case of the invalidity of that act, would not be bound by any legislative ordinances which had been promulgated since the year 1707 ; nor would any
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part of Britain be constitutionally subject to the laws of that parliament which had met at Westminster for the last ninety years. Even the act of renunciation, which Ireland considered as the 'corner-stone of her liberties and constitution,' would in that case not be obligatory.

As it had been hinted, that, from the different organisation of the Scottish and Irish parliaments, the competence of the former would not establish that of the latter, he answered that the difference was far from being material, and that one partook, as much as the other, of the general powers allowed to parliament by our constitution. He then referred to sir Edward Coke and sir William Blackstone; to prove that the power of parliament, whether in England, Scotland, or Ireland, was transcendent and absolute. As this assertion led to a difficulty, implying that the future imperial parliament might at any time abrogate even the articles of union, he explained away that point in a manner which zealous anti-jacobins will not approve, by saying that it might so act, but that it would thus incur the risque 'of entitling the subject to throw off that government which had become an instrument of oppression; and recur to first principles, to resistance, and insurrection.' He added, 'In the danger of the attempt [*to violate or repeal the act of union*] I see some security against its being made; and mean-while, in the identity of imperial interests, in the Irish share in imperial councils, and in the due proportion of lords and commons to be sent by Ireland to the common legislature, I discern some protection of Irish rights, and some guaranty against their violation. The united legislature may be competent to disfranchise Wales or Yorkshire, or to violate the terms on which the sister countries were incorporated;

corporated; but I see no moral possibility of the application of its absolute authority to such purposes.'

He afterwards adduced the authority of Montesquieu, in support of the power of parliament, and in refutation of the idea of the necessity of appealing to the people, who, when they have deputed their representatives, are, he thinks, *functi officio*, till by a new election they obtain the liberty of discarding unworthy members, and appointing the friends of their country.

In treating of the principle of parliamentary competence, he affirmed, that in all governments an absolute despotic power must be inherent, as, without it, disorder and confusion would prevail. This power, according to the British system, was lodged in the king, the nobles, and the people acting by their representatives in parliament. In its own nature, it would authorise those who lawfully enjoyed it, not merely to frame new laws under the constitution, but to adapt the government to contingent events and occasional circumstances, and attend with suitable provisions the successive changes of powers and interests, manners and opinions. On this ground, the proposed union was within the reasonable compass of parliamentary authority.

If he conceived that the measure would be a surrender of national independence, he would by no means agree to it; but it would merely be an incorporation of national distinctness. Nor would he promote the scheme, if he thought that it would not ensure an identity or community of interests.

To recommend an union by example, he mentioned the leading features of that of Scotland. From his inquiries he inferred, that the prosperity of that country

try had been considerably promoted by the measure; and, though some might not deem an union so requisite in the present case for preventing a separation, as it was in the instance of Scotland, since Ireland was more dependent on Great-Britain than the northern realm was before the year 1707, he was of opinion that the late extraordinary increase of the power of France, and the propagation of Jacobinical tenets, rendered the danger of a disjunction greater than in the former case.

Adverting to the affairs of the catholics, he argued, that an union would improve the views and hopes of those sectaries, as their disqualifications might in that event be removed without danger to the established church; and that, even if their claims should not be allowed, they would not be injured by the measure, but would find their situation less disagreeable than at present, from the more liberal behaviour of the satisfied protestant party, and the increase of wealth and comfort produced by extension of trade.

He concluded with stating his ideas of the state of the question. It was not, he said, whether the Irish should surrender the liberties of their country, but whether an union might not so modify their constitution, as to promote prosperity and peace, while it would leave their liberties unimpaired and even secured. Other points to be determined were, whether it would not fortify that empire (now endangered) of which Ireland had long formed a part; whether it would not silence internal jealousy and dissension, bestow commercial advantages, and so closely entwine the interests of the two kingdoms, that Britain would injure herself by obstructing Irish aggrandisement; and whether a refusal

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tal of union would not lead to a total separation, which would be followed by the subjection of Ireland to France. It was also to be considered, whether two legislatures in one empire did not tend to disunite; whether that distinct independence which might max imperial energy could be substantial or valuable; whether the Irish were in such a situation, that some radical and tranquil change did not seem desirable; and whether Britain would not purchase, by ample concessions, the strength which she might derive from an incorporation of the kingdoms.

Mr. EGAN was not inclined to surrender his opinion to the authority of Coke or Blackstone, or any lawyers who had argued for the competency of parliament. No legislature, he said, had a right to vote away its existence or the liberties of the nation, unless it should be specially empowered by the people to make such sacrifices; or, he might rather say, the people themselves had no right to bind their posterity. He ridiculed the pretended advantages of an union, and disclaimed all desire of such benefits.

Dr ARTHUR BROWNE affirmed, that even those writers who had forborne to state any limitations of the power of parliament did not mean to infer the absence of all limits. It was sufficient for them to make a general assertion in a point of such delicacy, leaving all exceptions to contingency and to the common sense of the reader. No public body could claim omnipotence, or challenge a right of resisting the demands of justice or violating the maxims of the constitution. On this ground, even if there were no other reasons, the union ought to be opposed.

Mr. CORRY, having complimented Mr. Smith and censured

censured his two opponents, spoke of the settlement of 1782, and denied that the measure now proposed involved a dereliction of the points gained by Ireland at that time. The basis on which she supported the claim then allowed was the inseparable connexion between representation and legislation; and the same principle was maintained in 1785, when she resisted propositions tending to subject her, in commercial affairs, to the laws of a parliament in which she was not represented. This principle would not be violated by the adoption of the scheme of union; for the object of the measure was not, that Ireland should, unrepresented, be bound by acts of the British legislature, but that the two parliaments should form one body, in which Ireland should have a fair and constitutional representation, and her just proportion of authority.—He then argued that any amendment or vote, by which the house should declare that it would never enter into the consideration of a certain subject, would be an unconstitutional infringement of the rights of the two other branches of the legislature—of the crown, which had a right to suggest, and of the peers, who had a right of discussion.

Mr. ARTHUR MOORE expatiated on the impolicy of an union, and strongly condemned it on various grounds; as did colonel Vereker, sir John Freke, and other speakers.

A division at length took place; and on this occasion the adversaries of the court prevailed; for 111 members voted for the omission of the contested paragraph, and only 106 gave their suffrages for its continuance. Mr. Ponsonby now proposed an amendment similar to his former motion; but, as it was deemed unnecessary, he consented to withdraw it.

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The public exultation rose to a great height on this defeat of the ministry. The unionists were insulted by the lower classes of the people; and the periodical prints joined in the clamor, and in expressions of joy at the abortion of the obnoxious scheme. The chief speakers of opposition obtained an extraordinary degree of popularity; their eloquence was extolled with hyperbolic praise, and their patriotic virtues were acknowledged with admiration and gratitude.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Summary of the Debates in the British Parliament on the Subject of an Union.

THE confident and sanguine disposition of the British minister induced him to prognosticate a speedy success to the project of an union with Ireland ; and he prepared, with his usual eagerness, to developé his plan of incorporation. In compliance with his advice, when the parliament of Great-Britain, after a short adjournment, re-assembled on the 22d of January, a message from the sovereign was delivered to the peers by lord Grenville, recommending an union in the following terms :

‘ His majesty is persuaded, that the unremitting industry with which our enemies persevere in their avowed design of effecting the separation of Ireland from this kingdom cannot fail to engage the particular attention of parliament ; and his majesty recommends it to this house to consider of the most effectual means of counteracting and finally defeating this design ; and he trusts that a review of all the circumstances which have recently occurred (joined to the sentiments of mutual affection and common interest) will dispose the parliaments of both kingdoms to provide, in the manner which they shall judge most expedient, for settling such a complete and final adjustment as may best tend to improve and perpetuate a connexion essential to their common security, and to augment and consolidate the strength, power, and resources of the British empire.’

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This message being twice read *pro forma*, lord Grenville proposed that it should be taken into consideration on the ensuing day, and that, in compliment to the importance of the communication, the lords should be summoned. The house readily agreed to both motions.

A similar message, on the same day, was presented to the commons by Mr. Dundas, who moved that it should be considered on the morrow. Mr. Sheridan immediately rose, and, while he declared his concurrence in the general sentiments which the message conveyed, he expressed his apprehensions of the danger which might arise from the discussion of particular points of union in the present state of affairs. He wished for the restoration of cordial harmony between Great-Britain and Ireland, but thought that a precipitate agitation of the proposed question might be fatal to the prosperity, perhaps to the existence, of both realms. He therefore could not join in any address which might pledge the house to enter into a speedy investigation of the subject.—Mr. Pitt replied, that the address which the house would be desired to vote would merely contain sentiments which every man who wished well to the interests of the two countries would be ready to adopt. On what solid grounds such an address could be opposed, he could not easily conjecture; nor did the observations which he had heard strike him as being perfectly respectful to his majesty. He did not wish to press the affair prematurely: full time, he said, would be allowed for deliberate inquiry and patient examination.—When Mr. Sheridan had disclaimed intentional disrespect, and had again deprecated the discussion of the subject, the secretary's motion received the assent of the house.

On the following day, lord Grenville moved for the
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consideration of the message ; but no debate occurred ; and the peers merely voted an address which was brought forward by that nobleman, thanking his majesty for his gracious communication, and assuring him that they would maturely deliberate on the subject recommended to their notice, and promote any adjustment which might appear to be necessary for the support and consolidation of the general interests of the British empire.

In the house of commons, Mr. Dundas, when he moved for an address of thanks, in answer to the royal message proposing the consideration of an union, observed that it was unnecessary for him to dwell on the subject at that time, as a future day would be appointed for the full discussion of it.

The address was scarcely read, when Mr. SHERIDAN called the attention of the house to the ideas which had arisen in his mind in this early stage of the business. A final adjustment, he said, was proposed ; and no explanations were given with regard to the failure of the last solemn adjustment between the countries. What was then deemed final was now considered in a contrary light by the ministers ; but, before the commencement of the proposed investigation, they ought to prove that the last agreement had not been productive of that cordial association and unity which it was thought would result from it. There was the stronger reason to expect this mode of proceeding, when the declaration of the Irish parliament in 1782* was
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* 'We beg leave to represent to his majesty, that his subjects of Ireland are entitled to a free constitution ; that the imperial crown of Ireland is inseparably annexed to the crown of Great-Britain, on which connexion the happiness of both nations essentially depends ; but that the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct dominion, having a parliament of
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recollected. The British legislature having acquiesced in this declaration, no other basis of connexion ought to be adopted. The people of Ireland, who cherished the pleasing remembrance of that period when independence came upon them as it were by surprise, when the genius of freedom rested upon their island, would come to this second adjustment with a temper which would 'augur not tranquillity but disquietude, not prosperity but calamity, not the suppression of treason, but the extension and increase of plots to multiply and ensanguine its horrors.'

It might be deemed informal, he said, to enter into this discussion on the mere proposal of an address of thanks; but he was not sensible of any impropriety of conduct on the occasion. He feared that the ground on which he stood was ticklish and dangerous, and that his motives were liable to misinterpretation from the licentious few, and to misapprehension from the ignorant many. But there were topics on which silence would be unworthy of the majesty of truth, and would misbecome a man enamoured of free discussion, who wished to act as the supporter of general liberty. 'My country,' he emphatically said, 'has claims upon me which I am not more proud to acknowledge than ready to liquidate, to the full measure of my ability.'

There was a time when it would have been intimated to him, that to agitate in this house any question relative to the affairs of Ireland would be an encroachment

her own, the sole legislature thereof: that there is no power whatsoever competent to make laws to bind this nation, except the king, lords, and commons, of Ireland; upon which exclusive right of legislation we consider the very essence of our liberties to depend, a right which we claim as the birth-right of the people of Ireland, and which we are determined, in every situation of life, to assert and maintain.'

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on the rights of the parliament of that country ; and that such an insult to the dignity of that body, and to its competence of legislation, might inflame that quick spirit of independence, which the sister kingdom knew how to express, and had ever appeared both able and ready to infuse, into a system of ardent intrepid opposition to every act of ulterior domination. But, at the present time, when the question involved the independence and even the existence of the Irish parliament, he did not suppose that any speaker would have recourse to such an argument. Perhaps it might be said, that he ought not to draw into discussion topics which tended to excite discontent, by being closely interwoven with the events of a recent period of distraction and danger ; and that he ought to consider the present state of Ireland before he should discuss such intricate and delicate interests as those which the king's message embraced. But he might rather say, that the ministers ought to have observed these rules before they brought forward a measure which might prove so hazardous in the execution. He could see the possible danger of increasing the discontent of the people of Ireland. An intriguing ambitious enemy might take advantage of the crisis ; and factious spirits at home might seize it as a conjuncture favorable to the success of their wild and visionary projects. These dangers could only be apprehended from a violation of the rights and the independence of Ireland. But, whatever might be the consequences of the present scheme, he was disposed to give credit to ministers for purity of intention. He could not suspect that they would propose a measure which they believed would ultimately cause a separation of Ireland from this country. They could not but think it necessary to the prosperity of the empire

to preserve the connexion unimpaired ; and he agreed with them in this opinion, and in a detestation of the conduct of an enemy who would dissolve that connexion. But he was apprehensive that the agitation of the scheme of union would rather encourage than deter our foes, and that the distraction which it might produce would aid their purpose.

To render an incorporative union in any respect a desirable measure, the sense of the nation, he said, ought to be freely manifested in favor of it ; but there was no prospect of obtaining such a concurrence ; and an union carried by surprise, by intrigue, by fraud, corruption, or intimidation, would leave both countries, with regard to permanency of connexion, in a situation worse than the present. It would not be said, he hoped, that Ireland must be either tricked or forced into her good ; or that, after the accomplishment of the scheme, we might convince her that she ought to have consented to it : nor ought the union to be obtained by following the advice of a pamphleteer, who hinted that we should recollect the game played off by the volunteers of Ireland to take advantage of Great-Britain, and play the same game against them. If this course should be pursued, what would be the future state of Ireland ? The conspiracies which had happily been defeated were such as ought to be carefully guarded against ; and he deplored, as much as any one, that the means of combining insurrection were so various and melancholy. There might have been much of the cause of revolt concealed under the measures of the government ; and, if the Irish should at any future period awake from the slumbers of that sloth which the slavery of union might occasion, they might say to the English, ‘ You offered us your assistance against domestic and foreign enemies ;

enemies; we accepted it, and, in return, gave you affection and gratitude, and the irreproachable pledge of all the support in our power. You then took advantage with your 40,000 soldiers; you constrained us to submit to an union; you would not wait for our consent. Some were afraid of being suspected of disloyalty, if they should come forward; others were banished; all were sensible that it was in your power, by acts of negative intimidation (the expression will be understood by those who talk of negative success)—by refusing to send more men, or to relieve our pecuniary difficulties—to force an union. By these acts you deprive Ireland of the power of resisting any claims that you make on her—you wring from her her independence—you intimidate and corrupt her parliament to surrender the people to a foreign jurisdiction.’ If the Irish should be enabled to speak thus with truth, he would not say that a future insurrection would be justified; but he would say, that the alleged grounds for it would wear a different color and complexion from the late insurrection. There would be nothing then that men would be ashamed to avow; they would say, we rise to regain our independence. The grounds of the late insurrection were different; but here would be one standard to rally round. Would they not say, we rise to recover our separate political existence, of which we have been deprived without our consent? The last insurrection was supported partly by the catholics, partly by the presbyterians, partly by the wild republicans; but the presence of a future insurrection would address itself equally to all, and it would be considered as a struggle for independence unjustly taken away. Such would be the consequences of an union effected in the present

circumstances. Some would say, that these pretences might be set up (for when did insurrection want pretences?)—but they would not be true. He would affirm, however, that they would be founded in fact.

In the prosecution of the subject, he spoke nearly to the following effect. ‘ That the proposition itself should be entertained in Ireland, must be considered as an extraordinary case. We must confess, to the period of the last solemn adjustment, the great impolicy and heinous injustice of the British government towards Ireland for 300 years. Is it then reasonable to suppose, that a country, the object of such insult for three centuries, when at last she had wrung from our tardy justice that independence which she had a right to claim, and had obtained commercial advantages, should, only sixteen years afterwards, so far forget all prejudices, as to surrender the means by which she acquired those advantages? Would this be the case, if the free sense of the country were manifested? But it is possible that, during those sixteen years, the parliament may have forfeited the confidence of the country. Do the Irish plead guilty to this charge? On the contrary, did not his majesty congratulate Ireland, that by the vigor of her parliament she had acquired an increase of prosperity? But there has been an insurrection in the country. Could that be attributed to the parliament? No. By his majesty’s lord-lieutenant that parliament was assured, that by its exertions the insurrection had been quelled: and is it now to be annihilated? is the vigilance of the British parliament to supersede the necessity for the other? is it likely that such a parliament should receive the proposition with patience, if left to its free will? I find that by the vigilance of the Irish parliament the conspiracy was detected and brought to light;

light: when new disturbances are dreaded, is it to be dismissed? Is the detection of plots likely to be better effected by the English parliament? by that parliament which acceded to a detailed report of a conspiracy supposed to exist in this country; a supposition, which, however, was negatived by the verdicts of English juries.—(*Hear! hear! from the ministerial side of the house.*)—I peremptorily repeat it, that juries negatived the existence of a conspiracy in this country. Gentlemen may treat verdicts as they please; but I believe they would hardly behave to me with much respect if I should treat the verdicts of conviction which have been pronounced in Ireland with as little respect as some persons treat the verdicts of acquittal in England.

‘ Will it be maintained, that the measure of an union will not wholly dissolve the legislature of Ireland; that independence will survive union, though in a modified state; and that the parliament will be left to judge of the local affairs of Ireland? Really this seems almost too much for men’s feelings. A parliament!—a sort of national vestry of Ireland, sitting in a kind of mock-legislative capacity, after being ignobly degraded from the rank of representatives of an independent people, and deprived of the greatest authority that any parliament could possess! Can such a state be called a state of independence? and can we suppose that the Irish will agree to such an union under any other circumstances than those of constraint?

‘ I may also ask, Is the parliament of England competent or qualified to legislate for the parliament of Ireland?—Impossible. Every advantage of situation favors the one; the other is unfitted for governing, or giving law, by every disadvantage of situation

tion and every dissimilarity of temper and habit. A high authority of the sister nation, no less an authority than the lord-chancellor Clare, has said that the English parliament is less acquainted with the state of Ireland than any other body of men in the world. How can it be, that in this state of recorded ignorance the parliament of England is better fitted to legislate for Irishmen, than that of Ireland with its experience? To assume this is to advance the most monstrous and preposterous proposition that ever fell from man. There has been an insurrection, and you propose to reward the people; you cashier the parliament of Ireland, though it has merits to plead; you leave new seeds of dissension and discord, and you take away the vigilant watchman; you leave banditti to roam throughout the country, and you read the riot act to disperse the lords and commons.

With respect to the general effect of this intimidation, it does not rest upon presumption. Is it not known that Ireland is at the mercy of England? Has not a threat been thrown out, in what may be considered as an official proclamation, that the troops which had been sent to Ireland might be withdrawn, that the money with which she is aided might be withheld, and the country left helpless and devoted? Must not the Irish, then, who have supported the connexion, feel that they are not at liberty to choose?—Such are the insinuations which an Irish clerk or secretary * has thought proper to throw out in his official pamphlet. The effect then upon the Irish must be, that it is impossible for them to come to a free discussion of the subject. Hints from persons in office might tend to make some remain pas-

* Mr. Cooke.

sive spectators ; and others, who act from passion and prejudice against the government of Ireland, might be willing to surrender all to the English government. Can those who are influenced in this manner be considered as proper persons to decide upon the measure ? Is there no other influence ? Has not one of the best and greatest friends of Ireland been dismissed from his office ? What must be the effect of such dismissions ? It is this—that, if you oppose the union, you are deemed unfit to serve his majesty. What is the inference that will be drawn, but that, if a person, whether in or out of office, should oppose the union, he will be considered as a traitor to his country ? What must be the inference upon the minds of the officers and volunteers throughout the kingdom ? That, if they dare to give an uncourtly opinion, they will be dismissed. I am willing to believe, that the noble lord, who is at the head of affairs in Ireland, was directed to do that which I have alluded to, and that it was not of his own accord. But to talk of free will under such circumstances is only adding mockery to injustice, and insult to injury.

‘ Again, I contend that the adjustment proposed will only unite two wretched bodies ; that the minds will still be distinct ; and that eventually it may lead to separation. I wish to know what the right honorable gentleman opposite to me would say, if France should act to another country as we are acting towards Ireland ? Let me suppose that aid was asked of France, not by a neutral power, not by Switzerland, to which she has behaved with such matchless perfidy ; not by a mere ally, but by a country connected with her in interests, whose subjects were fighting and bleeding for her all over the world ; that her aid was solicited to suppress domestic insurrection, and to repel foreign invasion : I suppose

suppose that she gives it bounteously, and that the country accepts it with gratitude; and afterwards we find France incorporating that very country into her own republic, one and indivisible. Would any person be more forward than the right honorable gentleman to treat with scorn and indignation the man who should defend such conduct? If too it was known here, that, when the officers of that country had used their utmost efforts to repress rebellion, a decree was passed by the directory to dismiss those officers from their employments, because they doubted the propriety of the measures of the government, would not gentlemen reprobate such conduct in France, and ridicule the idea that such incorporation was with the free will of that country? The king of Sardinia has consented to the surrender of his territory, and said it was right; but does any one believe that the consent was real? The case is the same with respect to Ireland. You cannot have her real consent; you do not wish it, or you would not have recourse to corruption and intimidation. We hear much abuse of French principles; but what I would recommend is, to abstain from French practices. If we are to incorporate any part of the empire, let us hold up the perfidy and the fraud of France to the disgust of the world, and let our conduct afford a direct contrast; let no suspicion be entertained that we gain our object by intimidation or corruption; let our union be an union of affection and attachment, of plain dealing and free will; let it be an union of mind and spirit, as well as of interest and power; let it not resemble those Irish marriages which commence in fraud, and are consummated by force. Let us not commit a brutal rape on the independence of Ireland, when by tenderness of behaviour we may have her the willing partner

ner of our fate, The state of Ireland does not admit such a marriage; her bans ought not to be published to the sound of the trumpet, with an army of 40,000 men. She is not qualified for hymeneal rites, when the grave and the prison hold so large a share of her population.'

That great danger would arise from the scheme, if it should be carried into effect, Mr. Sheridan was fully convinced; and, if it should fail, the peril of the enterprise would be readily admitted. But, from delay, no danger could arise; and it was incumbent on the chief projectors of the plan to state the reasons which rendered them so eager to press the adoption of it. As, however, they had not explained their motives, he had been obliged to have recourse to the pamphlet which had been circulated as the proclamation of the Irish government. He represented this publication as very weak in argument, and offensive in point of remark. The author offered some reasons for dispatch; but, between the disorder and the remedy proposed by him, there was little connexion; indeed, it seemed calculated to inflame and increase the malady. The pamphleteer thought it the more particularly necessary to urge the union, from a dread of the continued influence of the pope and the intrigues of the British anti-ministerial party. It would, he conceived, completely detach the catholics from the power of the pontiff, and remove or diminish the opportunities of exciting discontent in Ireland by the arts of an English faction.

Mr. Sheridan now amused the house by animadverting on some of the observations of Mr. Cooke. 'His mode of quieting the catholics,' said the orator, 'is by making them desperate—by telling them that they have nothing to hope from the parliament,'—“Dissatisfaction

tion (says the pamphleteer) would sink into acquiescence, and acquiescence soften into content.”—‘A very pretty sentence,’ said Mr. Sheridan, ‘for a novel! But what right has this author to assume, that, when the union shall have taken away the rights of the catholics, their dissatisfaction will sink into acquiescence? How can he be so regardless of all experience, or of all established policy, as to conceive that such a number of persons can be content under an exclusion from civil rights on account of religious differences?’

Having argued this point, he ridiculed the remedy proposed for the factious spirit of the English opposition. If the speeches of the members to whom the writer alluded tended to inflame the senators of Ireland, to bring the representatives of that country into the very focus of sedition did not seem the most likely means of repressing the evil.

In answer to Mr. Cooke’s argument against delay, drawn from the apprehensions of a natural termination of the life of a great personage, and the risque of a change of ministry, Mr. Sheridan made no other remark, than that there was a want of delicacy in the allusion. With respect to the writer’s allegation of the probable mischief of a disagreement between the legislatures, he observed that no material differences had occurred, or were likely to arise; that, in the affair of the propositions, we offered what was considered as a bounty, which the Irish rejected on account of the conditions annexed to it; and that, in the case of the regency, the two parliaments wished to have the same person on different terms. On the topic urged by the pamphleteer, respecting the expediency of making use of a time of war and embarrassment to accomplish the wishes of Britain, in return for the advantage

vantage taken by the Hibernian volunteers on a former occasion, and by the United Irishmen at a recent period, the speaker remarked, that the indignation of every man of honor must be roused by such an appeal to the spirit of revenge. These arguments of the 'official promulgator of the creed of the Castle,' he said, 'weighed so lightly against the disadvantages of the measure, that he could not but condemn the precipitancy with which it was brought forward.

Besides the dangers which he had before mentioned as attendant upon the scheme, Mr. Sheridan stated the risque of changes in our political system, from the introduction of one hundred members into the British house of commons—members who, having sacrificed the parliament of their own country, might not be scrupulously tender of the British constitution.—He afterwards disputed the competency of the Irish legislature to the sacrifice of itself. If such a right should be allowed to that parliament, it must also be supposed to belong to this; a circumstance which would tend to make the king absolute, and to vest in him for ever a vigor beyond the law. It had once been asserted by an able statesman, that, even if the lords and commons should agree to annul the charters of boroughs, the king could not assent to the measure. If this doctrine were true, the parliament of Ireland would not be justified in that transfer of itself which would violate its former constitution.

After some other remarks, Mr. Sheridan concluded his speech with an amendment, expressing the surprise and deep regret with which the house learned from his majesty that the final adjustment, which, upon his gracious recommendation, took place between the kingdoms in the year 1782, and which, by the declaration of

of the parliaments of both countries, placed the connexion between them upon a solid and permanent basis, had not produced the effects expected from that solemn settlement ; and also intimating, that his majesty's faithful commons, having strong reason to believe that it was in the contemplation of his ministers to propose an union of the legislatures of the two kingdoms, notwithstanding the said adjustment, felt it to be their bounden duty, impressed as they were with the most serious apprehensions of the consequences of such a proceeding at this time, to take the earliest opportunity humbly to implore his majesty not to listen to the counsel of those who should advise or promote such a measure at the present crisis, and under the present circumstances of the empire.

Mr. CANNING was the next speaker in this debate. He first answered the allegations of Mr. Sheridan with regard to the adjustment of the year 1782. That agreement, he said, was termed final in one of the resolutions then adopted ; but, from a subsequent vote, it appeared that the idea of establishing some more permanent system was not relinquished. An attention to the true import of this vote would remove all imputation of impropriety and inconsistency from the measure now proposed.—He then referred to the remarks of the anti-ministerial orator on the situation of Ireland, on the difficulties which would attend any attempt to carry a measure of this nature into execution, and on the little advantage that would arise if it should be effected. That the situation of Ireland was at all times a matter of great importance to Britain, was, said Mr. Canning, a point that required no argument to prove ; but, after the numerous and momentous events which had

had been witnessed within a short period, this country was more particularly interested in whatever concerned that kingdom. The events to which he alluded were too notorious to render it necessary for him to enlarge upon them. A most foul rebellion had broken out in that country, which, by the wise and vigorous measures of government, had been checked, though not totally quelled; party heats and animosities still existed; factions still remained, whose leaders did not merely aim at the expulsion of this or that set of ministers, who aimed not at a partial reform of this or that political abuse, real or pretended;—but whose views threatened the a tion of the government and constitution of Ireland, and the total ruin of all connexion between that count. and this? All who reflected on these circumstances could not but feel how deeply interested Great-Britain must be in the fate of Ireland. To convince any one who entertained a doubt of the existence of such a conspiracy, he would not recur to the verdicts of juries, but to evidence that would leave no doubt in the mind of any impartial man—evidence which would show that legal acquittal was not always a proof of moral innocence. He would prove the existence of a conspiracy, not for catholic emancipation parliamentary reform, but for the total subversion of the government, and for the complete separation of the two countries. He would prove this by the avowals of self-convicted traitors—avowals, not proceeding from a penitence for past guilt—not from a regret of the evils which they had brought upon the nation—not from an apprehension of the misfortunes which might ensue—not from a wish to save their country from the calamitous consequences of their own wicked-

wickedness—No ; such was not, he was sorry to say, the spirit with which those avowals were made. The seditious leaders still said to themselves, “ Though you have for the present defeated the treasonable plans which we were pursuing, we are not wholly divested of hope: though you have detected our plots (plots which, except for the vigilance of parliament and of the executive government, would have laid the capital of the country in ashes, and destroyed every thing that was valuable or dear to the inhabitants) ; though you have so far succeeded in discovering our conspiracies, still we have hopes ; much remains behind : though we have failed in the execution of our projects, we console ourselves with the idea that they will at one time or other be accomplished.”—‘ After the detection,’ (said Mr. Canning), ‘ of these deep and damned plots, is it not a matter of urgent necessity to devise and adopt the most effectual means of counteracting the pernicious consequences that might otherwise flow from them—consequences that not only affect the continuance of the connexion between the two countries, but which deeply strike at the prosperity and very existence of both ? ’

‘ Hence,’ this speaker added, ‘ the high importance of the object was evident. It was not the making of a provincial regulation, the adjustment of an internal difference, or the arrangement of a plan for balancing parties ; it was nothing less than to secure Ireland to us and to herself, and thus to promote the happiness and security of the whole empire. Instead of the strange mode of proceeding which the honorable gentleman had adopted, by requesting the house to treat a proposition of this immense importance with such unprecedented

cedented contempt, it would have been more fair and candid to point out the imperfections of the plan, and to wait for a communication of the particulars of that measure which he wished the house to reject without hearing. It would be a more statesman-like mode of proceeding—it would be more consistent with that patriotism which the honorable gentleman professed, and for which he was willing to give him credit—deliberately to examine this plan before he would reject it, and then, if he could suggest any other scheme by which such a desirable object could be attained, to state it for the consideration of the house. He had not, however, said that he possessed any such plan; and therefore the house ought not to reject the discussion of that which was now proposed to them.—In forming an opinion upon this momentous subject, Mr. Canning said, that he should endeavour to collect all possible information from persons the best acquainted with the state of the kingdom. It was far from his wish, in the discussion of this question, to take any uncandid advantage; and therefore he was very willing to admit, that the proposition to be laid before the house would certainly be in the nature of an union. The rebellion which had existed could be repelled only by force; but, on the supposition of its being entirely quelled, he would ask any man, what he deemed the probable issue of the agitations that distracted that country. In this part of the argument he could not avoid alluding to a book which Mr. Sheridan had attributed to the office in Ireland. The honorable gentleman seemed to think the author of that work highly inconsistent in endeavouring to persuade two great bodies of people that their interests were mutually reconcileable. But it did not really appear to Mr. Can-

ning, on consideration of the present state of Ireland, that there was any thing either impolitic or inconsistent in such an attempt. As the best mode of obtaining information was, to ask the parties most interested in the affair, he would first ask those who were the warmest advocates for the protestant ascendancy. Of a work written by a learned and ingenious man (Dr. Duigenan), he observed, that one of more convincing argument and more sound truth he had never seen. The author, he thought, had confuted his antagonist, Mr. Grattan, in the completest manner. In speaking thus of Dr. Duigenan, he did it without partiality, because he did not know whether that gentleman was friendly to the union or not. The doctor was well known to be decidedly hostile to the pretensions of the catholics, insisting on their exclusion from a share in the legislature, or in any of the great offices of state; but he admitted at the same time that the necessity of that exclusion would be done away by the adoption of some plan similar to that proposed in his majesty's message. It was stated by him as an unavoidable alternative, either that such a plan must be adopted, or that some other must be devised for the confirmation of the protestant ascendancy. Either the laws against popery, he thought, ought to be fully re-enacted, or an union must be carried into effect. If the latter scheme should be adopted, the re-enactment would be unnecessary. The protestant party seemed willing to adopt an union, or, in failure of it, to continue a struggle for every thing dear to them in rights and pre-eminence, and in religion: without an union, the catholic body would continue a contest for complete emancipation.

Here then were two parties in opposition to each other, agreeing, however, in one common opinion. But
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it was contended that this was an improper time for proposing the measure; yet, if an union would quiet the agitations of Ireland, why should the remedy be delayed? If two combatants could be parted, it would be wrong to postpone the interference till all the mischiefs of the battle should have taken place. Why should the parliament of either country suffer the efforts of traitors to be continued, by neglecting the only measure that could effectually counteract them? Would it be proper to wait till the French should attempt another invasion; or would it be prudent, from a spirit of delicacy, which might wish to avoid an interference between national parties, to neglect an opportunity of securing Ireland from the grasp of France? The present time seemed particularly proper for the scheme of union; and one of the effects that would speedily result from it would be the removal of a considerable part of that armed force which excited the jealousy of the last speaker. That the deliberations of the Irish legislature had been influenced by the terrors of that army, or that the freedom of speech had been taken away, Mr. Canning was unwilling to admit. No evidence of such intimidation, he said, could be adduced; nor could it be supposed that a parliament vested with constitutional power would proceed to the discussion of the question under such an influence.—Adverting to the alleged dismissal of officers of the crown for being unfriendly to the union, he justified the conduct of the ministry towards sir John Parnell, whose opposition to a measure of such importance would render him a very unfit associate, and might excite doubts of the sincerity of the court.—He also obviated a comparison which had been drawn between the proposed union and the French mode of incorporation. In what fea-

tures, he asked, did the pretended resemblance consist? Did the formation of a common cause between nations similar in laws, in language, in manners, and in habits—connected by the ties of blood, and bound together by commercial benefits—resemble the practice of French fraternity? No; it was of a very different stamp, and was particularly calculated to promote the prosperity of the inferior nation, not to oppress it, as had recently been the case in the principality of Piedmont, which the fierce republicans had wrested from the hands of its persecuted sovereign.

Mr. Canning added, that the state of Ireland rendered an union expedient for her security, as by such a scheme the assistance which she required would be more conveniently and effectually afforded than by any other plan. The offer, at least, merited the deliberate notice of the Hibernian parliament. It ought to be considered, that some of the principles of the French revolution had made a great impression upon the inhabitants of Ireland, poor and uncivilised as the generality of them were, and distracted by religious feuds; and that the enemy still hoped to profit by the favorable dispositions of a part of that nation. To extinguish such hopes, to put Ireland out of danger, both from her foreign and domestic enemies, and in every point of view to improve her condition, were the objects of the proposed union. It was not the fault of the people that the country was in such a situation; they wanted commerce, they wanted capital, they wanted a particular class of men to connect the highest and the lowest orders of society, so as to harmonise the whole. But it was not a mere act of parliament that would accomplish these great and beneficial objects: it was only a connexion with a country which had capital, which had commerce,

commerce, which had a respectable middle class of men, that could effect the desired change.

As not only the time of the offer was disapproved by Mr. Sheridan, but also the manner in which it had been brought forward, Mr. Canning observed, that, if this proposition had followed a series of attempts on the part of England to injure Ireland, it might then have some appearance of unfairness; but, he asked, was that the case? was this the first remedy that England had proposed, or had she ever refused assistance to Ireland? It had been said, that for the space of three hundred years we had oppressed Ireland. He had not been long in parliament, and consequently had little of the guilt of that oppression to answer for; but for the last twenty years the conduct of England had been a series of concessions. The Irish wanted an octennial parliament; it was granted. They wished for an independent legislature; and they had their wish. They desired a free trade; and it was given to them. A very large body of the people of Ireland desired a repeal of a part of the penal code which they deemed oppressive; and the repeal was granted. The honorable gentleman had spoken as if nothing had been done for Ireland but what she extorted, and what she had a right to demand; he seemed to think that past favors were no proofs of kindness. But it might be proper to ask that gentleman, whether an independent country could demand a trade to our colonies as a matter of right, or could claim the liberty of sending her commodities into this country, in order to be re-exported with English bounties, as a point of right? It was undoubtedly expedient that these advantages should be given to Ireland, because her prosperity is the prosperity of England; but they

were not privileges which she could claim as matters of right.

Mr. Canning concluded with recommending a strict attention to his majesty's proposal, as the only great and comprehensive view that had ever been taken of the affairs of Ireland, and with declaring his opposition to Mr. Sheridan's amendment, as it would debar the Irish from obtaining that relief which their necessities and their danger demanded.

Mr. JONES objected to the proposal of union on various grounds. It was, he said, an unseasonable measure, while the rebellion was yet unquelled, as it seemed likely to promote the distractions of the country. Being unsolicited by the Irish, who were the best judges of its expediency, it was ill calculated to allay their discontent; and, if it should be adopted, it might inflame the contest by exposing its adversaries to military vengeance. It resembled French fraternisation, rather than amicable or cordial union: it was contrary to the genuine principles of justice and to the true rights of man.

After Mr. Sheridan, in explanation, had briefly supported the opinions which he had delivered, Mr. PITT offered himself to notice, as a defender of the address, and of the general principle of the proposed union. The address, he said, would only pledge the house to take into serious consideration a subject which was earnestly recommended to its notice, and which was closely connected with the interest of the British empire. The mover of the amendment, however, had deprecated all deliberation upon the subject, and even insinuated that the Irish parliament had not the power of carrying the result of its deliberations into effect, if it should deter-
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mine in favor of an union, without an appeal to the people. This position, if true, would be applicable to the parliaments of both countries, the rights and privileges of both being the same; and it would thence follow, that the English legislature had no authority to settle the union with Scotland—an union under which the laws of both countries had been improved, property had been protected, and the prosperity of Great-Britain had been highly augmented. Such a position would invalidate the acts of the last ninety years, and tend to an annihilation of the authority of parliament.—To say that the ministers wished to surprise the house into this measure, was also an ill-founded assertion; for they had rather been scrupulous in the opposite extreme. An address merely general had been proposed; a day had been mentioned for a communication of the outline of the plan; the discussion of particulars would be postponed; and the parliament would not be requested to determine upon the measure before ample time should have been allowed for deliberation. The question therefore was, whether the house should proceed in this grave and solemn manner, or should, without examination, pronounce the union to be unnecessary, dangerous, or impracticable. If the honorable gentleman had the least expectation of persuading a majority to agree with him, he ought to prove, either that the present state of Ireland required no remedy, or that, if some remedial attempts should appear to be requisite for curing the disorders of the country, an union would not accomplish that desirable purpose. That gentleman and his friends had, in the course of many years, loudly complained of the mismanagement of the affairs of Ireland, expatiated on the deformity of its constitution, and lamented the miseries of its inhabitants;

habitants; but now they seemed to have forgotten these grounds of clamor, or to think that the cure of the remaining evils might safely be left to the operation of time. Would it not, however, be more prudent to apply a promising remedy at the present time, than to risque the effects of long delay, by which the evils of the country might be aggravated and embittered? These evils had a deep root, being involved in the prevailing character, manners, and habits of the people, in their want of knowledge and intelligence, in the state of property, in the separation between certain classes, and in the rancor of religious dissensions. Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform had been recommended as remedies; but there was little doubt that these pretences covered dangerous designs. If those objects could be obtained by calm investigation, and should seem adequate correctives, few would decline an acquiescence in them. ‘But (added Mr. Pitt) if the state of society is such, that laws, however wise in themselves, will be ineffectual as to their object until the manners and customs of the people are altered—if men are in a state of poverty in which it is impossible that they can have any comfort—if the progress of civilisation depends in a great measure upon the distribution of wealth—if the improvement of that wealth depends much upon the distribution of capital—if all the advantages to be derived from an increase of national wealth depend much upon the temper of the inhabitants—if those advantages, together with the still greater advantage of mental improvement, are all retarded by the distractions and divisions of party, by the blind zeal and phrensy of religious prejudices, by old and furious family feuds—if all these causes combine to make a country wretched, what is the remedy?

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A legislature standing aloof from local party connexion, sufficiently removed from the influence of contending factions to be advocate or champion of neither—being so placed as to have no superstitious reverence for the names and prejudices of ancient families that have so long enjoyed the monopoly of certain public patronages and property which custom has sanctioned, and which modern necessity may justify—a legislature that will neither give way to the haughty pretensions of a few, nor open the door to popular inroads, to clamor, or to the invasion of all sacred forms and regularities, under the false and imposing colors of philosophical improvement in the art of government. This is what is wanted for Ireland. Where is it to be found? In the country where the evils which I have enumerated exist, or in this?—Where should that legislature deliberate? In a place where the utmost effort of what is called patriotism amounts to nothing more than an aim at temporary popularity, as is evident from what has happened, or in a place where the discussion is calm and temperate? Certainly the latter—that is, in England. To neglect the establishment of such a legislature, when it is possible to do so, is an imprudence which nothing can justify.'

* In farther reply to Mr. Sheridan, the minister observed, 'It was said by the honorable gentleman that this country had oppressed Ireland for three hundred years: that is not a point to which I assent; but I will say that for one hundred years this country has followed a very narrow policy with regard to that kingdom. When the connexion with Ireland was something more than a name, when that connexion was ascertained, and the imperial parliament of this country exercised a supremacy over Ireland, it did happen that during that period

period the narrow policy of Great-Britain, influenced by views of commercial advantage, tainted and perverted by selfish motives, treated Ireland with illiberality and neglect, and did not look upon her prosperity as that of the empire at large. I reprobated, as much as the honorable gentleman, that narrow-minded policy as mischievous and pregnant with the most fatal consequences to both kingdoms. These jealousies, however, will be buried by the plan which will soon be brought forward.—We all have in our mouths a sentence, importing that every good Englishman and good Irishman feel we must stand or fall together ; that we should live and die together ; and yet without such a measure as that which is about to be proposed to you, there can be no security for the continuance of that sentiment. The happiness of both countries ought to be perpetual. As it stands now, it is liable to a thousand accidents—it depends upon the violence of the moment ; it may be governed upon views of temporary popularity, or by the personal convenience of a few individuals ; a tenure upon which the happiness of a nation ought never to depend.'

Of the settlement of the year 1782 he said, 'The very authors of the measure were not satisfied with their own work, as appears from the journals of the house. They saw the imperfections of their own measure ; and, as a supplement, it was recorded on the journals, that such other terms should be settled as should be agreed on between the two nations. But nothing has been done to give it effect, and therefore I have their own authority to say that it is defective.'

He added, that it was incumbent on those gentlemen to show the bad tendency of the present measure, rather than requisite for its advocates to enlarge on its probable,

probable benefits ; for the conduct of the former proclaimed the necessity of making some new attempt in favor of Ireland. Those who sanctioned the independence of the Hibernian parliament, without any security that the two legislatures would never differ essentially upon any point in which the happiness of the British empire might be involved, were particularly bound to show that such a difference was not likely to happen, or that it might easily be remedied. ‘ How stands the case in point of experience ? Is there a probability, or is there not, that the parliaments of the two countries may differ upon a point that may be essentially interesting to the British empire ? I say you have a guide upon that subject ; you may profit by experience—I mean by the case of the regency. The honorable gentleman says that there was no difference between the parliaments as to the regent. There was, indeed, no difference as to the *person* who was to be regent ; but there was an essential difference as to the *principle* on which that person was to be regent : the Irish parliament decided on one principle, the British parliament on another ; their agreement with regard to the person was accidental ; and upon the distinct principles on which they proceeded, they might as well have differed in the choice of the person who was to be regent as in the adjustment of the powers which were to be granted to him. He would have been regent in one capacity in one country, and in a capacity directly the reverse in the other. It therefore followed that the office might, upon grounds equally justifiable, have been vested in distinct persons. Will any man, with so instructive an example before his eyes, talk with sincerity of a final adjustment ? Will any man tell us that the security of the empire is in its present view

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founded on a permanent basis? Is not this an instance of a material difference upon a point that was essential to the welfare of the British empire; and what security is there that an essential difference upon some other object may not hereafter occur between the parliaments? Will then any one say, that there is no necessity for arrangement, for securing an uniformity of opinion on points essential to the existence of the empire; and guarding against all those evils which must arise, when two bodies, which should act in concert, move in contrary directions? That they have not hitherto differed in the great and momentous events which have been agitated before parliament, is a good fortune which has arisen from one general cause from the union of all descriptions of persons against one common enemy, with the exception only of a few, whose counsels, happily for both countries, and for the civilised part of the world, have lost all their influence.

‘ But can any man say that such difference as was manifested in the time of the regency will never occur again? When we come to treat of peace, for instance, or to consider the subject of alliance with any foreign power, or any question of trade or commerce, may not local prejudices (I say prejudices, for they have great influence) occasion a difference between the legislatures upon points that may be essential to the welfare of the British empire? A party in England may give to the throne one species of advice by its parliament; a party in Ireland may give counsel directly opposite. What would have been the consequence both to England and Ireland, had the dissensions in Ireland been the same in point of force against the executive government in parliament, since the commencement of the present war, as they were at the time when the Irish propositions were

were rejected? If, in the present contest, the leaders of opposition should have as much influence in Ireland as they formerly possessed, a vote for peace may pass, and the efforts of Great-Britain may be paralysed. Will the honorable gentleman tell me, that the parliament of Ireland may not in such a case neutralise its ports, prevent the raising of recruits for the army and navy, strike a fatal blow at the power, and endanger the existence of the empire? Let any man maturely reflect on the dangers that may result from the present situation of both countries; and he will tremble at the perils to which they are exposed.—Under these circumstances, can we do justice to either country if we neglect to bring forward the proposal of union?’

After a renewed exposure of the deplorable state of Ireland, and an additional enforcement of the necessity of incorporating that realm with Great-Britain, he said, ‘I see the case so plainly, and I feel it so strongly, that no apparent or probable difficulty, no fear of toil, or apprehension of a loss of popularity, shall deter me from making every exertion to accomplish the great work, on which, I am persuaded, depend the internal tranquillity of Ireland, the general interest of the British empire, and perhaps the happiness of a great part of the habitable world.’

When the question was put for the amendment, it was rejected without a division; and the address was immediately voted. After a short interval, the subject was more fully discussed and debated.

On the 31st of January, the message being again read, Mr. PITT rose, and in a long speech supported the grand object which his sovereign recommended. He began with a reference to the late proceedings of the
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house of commons in Ireland. That the parliament of that kingdom had the right and the power of rejecting a proposition of this nature, he did not presume to deny; yet, convinced as he was that the measure would not only tend to the general benefit of the empire of Great-Britain, but would particularly increase the prosperity and ensure the safety of Ireland, he deeply lamented the unfavorable reception of the scheme. He did not mean to speak disrespectfully of the conduct of the Irish house of commons; but, while he admitted and respected their rights, he felt that, as a member of the parliament of Great-Britain, he also had 'a right to exercise and a duty to perform.' That duty was to express, as distinctly as he could, the official nature and outline of a plan which he considered as pregnant with the most important advantages. If the British parliament, upon full explanation and after mature deliberation, should be inclined to favor the scheme, he would propose that its opinion should remain recorded as a determination by which it would abide, leaving to the dispassionate judgement of the legislature of Ireland the future adoption or rejection of it.

With regard to the general principle of the measure, it was not probable, he said, that any great difference of opinion would arise among those whom he addressed, as, on a former day, both sides of the house seemed to consider a perpetual connexion between Great-Britain and Ireland as essential to the true interests of both. He did not merely wish, however, for the maintenance of that connexion as tending to add to the general strength of the empire; he wished for the maintenance of it with a peculiar regard to the local interests of Ireland, with a regard to every thing that could give to that country its due weight and importance, as a great member

ber of the empire, furnish it with the means of improving all its great natural resources, and admit it to a full participation of the blessings so eminently enjoyed by Great-Britain.

‘ Considering the subject in this point of view (to use the words of the minister), and assuming it as a proposition not to be controverted, that it is the duty of those who wish to promote the interest and prosperity of both countries, to maintain the strongest connexion between them, let us ask, what is the situation of affairs that has called us to the discussion of this subject? This very connexion, the necessity of which has been admitted on all hands, has been attacked by foreign enemies and traitors. The dissolution of this connexion is the great object of the hostility of the common enemies of both countries; it is almost the only remaining hope with which they now continue the contest. Baffled and defeated as they have hitherto been, they still retain the hope, they are still meditating attempts, to dissolve that connexion. In how many instances already the defeat of their hostile designs has been turned to the confirmation of our strength and security, I need not enumerate. God grant that in this instance the favor of Divine Providence, which has in so many instances protected this empire, may again be manifested! and that the attempts of the enemy to separate the two countries may ultimately tend to knit them more closely together, to strengthen a connexion, the best pledge for the happiness of both, and thus add to that power which forms the chief barrier to the civilised world against the destructive principles, the dangerous projects, and the unexampled usurpation of France! This connexion has been attacked not only by the avowed enemies of both countries,

tries, but by internal treason acting in concert with the designs of the enemy ; internal treason, which engrafted Jacobinism on the diseases necessarily growing out of the state and condition of Ireland.

‘ A close connexion with Ireland being thus allowed to be essential to the interests of both countries, and this connexion being dangerously attacked, let it not be insinuated that it is unnecessary, much less improper, at this arduous and important crisis, to see whether some new arrangements, some fundamental regulations, are not requisite, to guard against the threatened danger. The foreign and domestic enemies of these kingdoms have shewn, that they think this the vulnerable point in which we may be most successfully attacked. Let us derive advantage, if we can, from their hostility ; let us profit by the designs of those who, if their conduct displays no true wisdom, at least possess in an eminent degree that species of wisdom which is calculated for the promotion of mischief. They know upon what footing the connexion rests at this moment between the countries ; and they feel the most ardent hope, that the two parliaments will be infatuated enough not to render their designs abortive, by fixing that connexion upon a more solid basis.

‘ These circumstances, I am sure, will not be denied ; and if upon other grounds we had any doubt, these alone ought to induce us, deliberately and dispassionately, to review the situation of the two countries, and to endeavour to find out a proper remedy for an evil, the existence of which is too apparent. It requires merely a moment’s reflexion, for any man who has marked the progress of events, to decide upon the true state and character of this connexion. It is evidently one that does not afford the degree of security which,
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even in times less dangerous and less critical than the present, would have been necessary to enable the empire to avail itself of its strength and resources,

‘ When I last addressed the house on this subject, I stated that the settlement of the year 1782, far from deserving the name of a final adjustment, was one that left the connexion between Great-Britain and Ireland exposed to all the attacks of party and all the effects of accident. That settlement consisted in the demolition of the system which before held the two countries together. Let me not be understood as expressing any regret at the termination of that system. I disapproved it, because I thought it was unworthy of the liberality of Great-Britain, and injurious to the interests of Ireland. But to call that a system in itself—to call that a glorious fabric of human wisdom; which is no more than the mere demolition of another system—is a perversion of terms which, however prevalent of late, can only be the effect of gross misconception or of great hypocrisy. We boast that we have done every thing, when we have merely destroyed all that before existed, without substituting any thing in its place. Such was the final adjustment of 1782; and I can prove it to be so, not only from the plainest reasoning, but by the opinion which the British parliament expressed at that very time. I can prove it by the declared opinion of the very ministers by whom it was proposed and conducted. I refer, for what I have said, to proofs which they will find it very difficult to answer; I mean their own acts, which will plainly shew their opinion of the necessity of a new system.’

Mr. Pitt then quoted the parliamentary journals, to prove that the repeal of the declaratory act was not considered by the minister of the day as preclusive of endeavours for the formation of an ulterior settlement

between the kingdoms ; for, under his auspices, an address had been voted, requesting his majesty to take such measures as might ' establish, by mutual consent, the connexion between this kingdom and Ireland upon a solid and permanent basis.' No measures of that kind, however, had since been adopted. The two countries were left with separate and independent legislatures, connected only by the identity of the executive government ; and that this was not a sufficient tie to unite them in time of peace, to consolidate their strength in time of war, to give to Ireland her full share of commercial and political advantages, or to both nations a due degree of strength and prosperity, might be strongly and truly maintained. On this head he referred to the opinion of Mr. Foster, who was chancellor of the exchequer in Ireland at the time when the commercial propositions were brought forward. That minister then said, ' Things cannot remain as they are. Commercial jealousy is roused ; it will increase with two independent legislatures ; and, without an united interest in commerce, in a commercial empire, political union will receive many shocks, and separation of interest must threaten separation of connexion ; which every honest Irishman must shudder to look at, as a possible event.' Mr. Pitt quoted these expressions to prove that Mr. Foster considered the situation of the two countries, after the adjustment of 1782, as leading to the danger of a separation, and that the arrangements of that year were not deemed final even by those who now mentioned them in that light with a view of counteracting the present measure.

Mr. Pitt added, that the evils apprehended by Mr. Foster could only be remedied by two means——either by a commercial compact, similar to that which was rejected in 1785, or by an union of the two legislatures.

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The inadequacy of the existing connexion to the prevention of danger, he said, evidently appeared in the case of the regency, which, though vested in one person, would have been enjoyed by different tenures in the two kingdoms, with the great risque of a separation. Its imperfection would have more strikingly appeared if the two parliaments had differed on the subject of the present war—if, while one voted it to be just and necessary, the other had pronounced it unjust, unnecessary, and hostile to the principles of humanity and freedom. A disagreement on such a question would have been pregnant with great peril.

He then stated, in the following manner, the circumstances which peculiarly demanded, at the present moment, the application of a remedy to the alleged imperfection.

‘ This country is at this time engaged in the most important and momentous conflict that ever occurred in the history of the world; a conflict in which Great-Britain is distinguished for having made the only manly and successful stand against the common enemies of civilised society. We see the point in which those enemies think us the most assailable. Are we not then bound in policy and prudence to strengthen that vulnerable point, involved as we are in a contest of liberty against despotism, of property against rapine, of religion and order against impiety and anarchy? There was a time when this would have been termed declamation; but, unfortunately, long and bitter experience has taught us to feel that it is only the feeble and imperfect representation of those calamities (the result of French principles and French arms) which are every day attested by the wounds of a bleeding world.

‘ Is there a man who does not admit the importance of a measure which, at such a crisis, may augment

the strength of the empire, and thus ensure its safety? Would not that benefit to Ireland be of itself so solid, so inestimable, that, in comparison with it, all commercial interests and the preservation of local habits and manners would be trifling, even if they were endangered by the present measure which they undoubtedly are not? The people of Ireland are proud, I believe, of being associated with us in the great contest in which we are engaged, and must feel the advantage of augmenting the general force of the empire. That the present measure is calculated to produce that effect, is a proposition which I think cannot be disputed. There is not in any court of Europe a statesman so ill informed as not to know, that the general power of the empire would be increased to a very great extent by such a consolidation of the strength of the two kingdoms. In the course of the century every writer of any information on the subject has holden the same language; and in the general strength of the empire both kingdoms are more concerned than in any particular interests which may belong to either. If we should ask the ministers of our allies, what measure they deem the most likely to augment the power of the British empire, and consequently increase that strength by which they are now protected—if we should ask the agents of our enemies, what measure is the most likely to render their designs abortive—the answer would be the same in both cases, *viz.* the firm consolidation of every part of the empire.

‘ There is another consideration that claims attention. What are the peculiar means by which we have been enabled to resist the unequalled and eccentric efforts of France, without any diminution, nay with an increase, of our general prosperity?—What, but the great commercial resources which we possess? A measure,

sure, then, which will communicate, to such a mighty limb of the empire as Ireland, all the commercial advantages which Great-Britain possesses, which will open the markets of one country to the other, which will give to both the common use of their capital, must by diffusing a large portion of wealth into Ireland, considerably increase the resources, and consequently the strength, of the whole empire.

‘ But it is not merely in this general view that I think the question ought to be considered. We ought to look to it with a peculiar view to the permanent interest and security of Ireland. When that country was threatened with the double danger of hostile attacks by enemies without, and of treason within, from what quarter did she derive the means of her deliverance? —From the naval force of Great-Britain—from the voluntary exertions of her troops of every description—and from her pecuniary resources, added to the loyalty and energy of the inhabitants of Ireland itself; qualities of which it is impossible to speak with too much praise, and which shew how well they deserve to be called the brethren of Britons. Their own courage might, perhaps, have ultimately succeeded in repelling the dangers with which they were threatened; but it would have been after a long contest, and after having waded through seas of blood. Are we sure that the same ready and effectual assistance which we have happily afforded on the present occasion, will be always equally within our power? Great-Britain has always felt a common interest in the safety of Ireland; but that interest was never so obvious and urgent as when the common enemy made her attack upon Britain through the medium of Ireland, and when the attack upon Ireland tended to deprive her of her connexion with Britain, and to substitute in lieu of it the

new government of the French republic. When that danger threatened Ireland, the purse of Great-Britain was open for the wants of Ireland, as for the necessities of England.

‘ I do not state these circumstances, as upbraiding Ireland for the benefits we have conferred ; far from it ; but I state them with pleasure, as shewing the friendship and good-will with which this country has acted towards her. But, if struggles of this sort may and must again occur, if the worst dangers are those which are yet to come, dangers which may be greater from being more disguised—if those situations may arise when the same means of relief are not in our power, what is the remedy that reason and policy point out ? It is to identify the natives with ourselves—it is to make them a part of the same community, by giving them a full share of those accumulated blessings which are diffused throughout Great-Britain ; in a word, by giving them a full participation of the wealth, the power, and the stability, of the British empire. If then this measure is not only recommended by the obvious defects of the system which now exists, but has also the pre-eminent recommendation of increasing the general power of the empire, and of guarding against future danger from the common enemy, we are next to consider it as to its effects upon the internal condition of Ireland.

‘ I know perfectly well, that, as long as Ireland is separated from Great-Britain, any attempt on our part to pursue measures which we might think salutary, with respect to questions of contending sects or parties, the claimed rights of the catholics, or the precautions necessary for the security of the protestants, must certainly be a violation of the independence of that kingdom, and an usurpation of the right of deciding points which

which can only be brought within our province by compact. But, as I cannot be inattentive to the events that are passing before me, I must affirm, that whoever considers the French as shewing by their conduct, that they deem Ireland the weakest and most vulnerable part of the empire; whoever reflects on the dreadful and inexcusable cruelties instigated by the enemies of both countries, and on those lamentable severities with which the exertions for the defence of Ireland were unhappily, but unavoidably, attended, and the necessity of which is itself one great aggravation of the crimes and treasons which led to them, must feel that, as it now stands composed, in the hostile division of its sects, in the animosities existing between ancient settlers and original inhabitants, in the ignorance and want of civilisation which mark that country more than almost any other country in Europe, in the unfortunate prevalence of Jacobin principles, arising from these causes, and augmenting their malignity, and which have produced the distressed state that we now deplore; every one, I say, who reflects upon all these circumstances, must agree with me in thinking, that there is no cure but in the formation of a general imperial legislature, free alike from terror and from resentment, removed from the danger and agitation, uninfluenced by the prejudices and uninflamed by the passions of that distracted country.

‘ Among the great and known defects of Ireland, one of the most prominent features is, its want of industry and of capital. How are those wants to be supplied, but by blending more closely with Ireland the industry and the capital of this country? But, above all, in the great leading distinctions between the people of Ireland, I mean their religious distinctions, what is their

their situation?—The protestant feels that the claims of the catholics threaten the existence of the protestant ascendancy, while, on the other hand, the great body of catholics feel the establishment of the national church, and their exclusion from the exercise of certain rights and privileges, as grievances. In this state of affairs, it becomes a matter of difficulty in the minds of many persons, whether it would be better to attend to the fears of the former, or to grant the claims of the latter.

‘ I am well aware that the subject of religious distinction is a dangerous and delicate topic, especially when applied to such a country as Ireland. Where the established religion of the state is the same as the general religion of the empire, and where the property of the country is in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons professing that religion, while the religion of a great majority of the people is different, it is not easy to say, on general principles, what system of church establishment in such a country would be free from difficulty and inconvenience. By many, I know, it will be contended, that the religion professed by a majority of the people would at least be entitled to an equality of privileges; but those who apply such an argument without qualification to the case of Ireland, surely forget the principles on which English interest and English connexion have been established in that country, and on which its present legislature is formed. No man can say, that, in the present state of things, and while Ireland remains a separate kingdom, full concessions can be made to the catholics, without endangering the state, and shaking the constitution of Ireland to its centre. On the other hand, when the conduct of the

the catholics shall be such as to make it safe for the government to admit them to the participation of the privileges granted to those of the established religion, and when the temper of the times shall be favorable to such a measure, it is obvious that this question may be agitated in an united imperial parliament with much greater safety than it could be in a separate legislature. I also think it certain that, even for whatever period it may be thought necessary, after the union, to withhold from the catholics the enjoyment of those advantages, many of the objections which at present arise out of their situation would be removed, if the protestant legislature were no longer separate and local, but general and imperial; and the catholics themselves would at once feel a mitigation of the most goading and irritating of their present causes of complaint.'

Besides the great object of healing the dissensions and providing for the internal tranquillity of Ireland, there were other points, this speaker observed, which, though less important, were highly material. It had been asked, What are the positive advantages which will accrue to Ireland from an union? The question resembled one which had been frequently put during the last six years—What are the advantages which Britain has gained by the present war with France? To this, the brilliant successes of the British arms, our unexampled naval victories, the solid acquisition of valuable territory, the general increase of our power, the extension of our commerce, and 'a series of events more glorious than any that ever adorned the page of our history,' afforded, he said, an ample and satisfactory answer: but there was another general answer, which would alone be sufficient;—that we did not

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enter into this war for any purpose of ambition ; our object was not to acquire, but to preserve ; and in this sense, what we gained by the war was, in one word, ALL that we should have lost without it—the preservation of our constitution, our independence, our honor, our existence as a nation.

‘ In the same manner,’ Mr. Pitt continued, ‘ I might answer the question with respect to Ireland ; I might enumerate the general advantages which she would derive from the effects of the proposed arrangement ; the protection which she will secure to herself in the hour of danger ; the most effectual means of increasing her commerce and improving her agriculture, the command of English capital, the infusion of English manners and English industry, necessarily tending to meliorate her condition, to accelerate the progress of internal civilisation, and to terminate those feuds and dissensions which now distract the country, and which she does not possess within herself the power either to control or to extinguish. She would see the avenue to honors, to distinctions, and exalted situations in the general seat of empire, opened to all those whose abilities and talents enable them to indulge an honorable and laudable ambition.

‘ Independently of all these advantages, I might also answer, that the question is not what Ireland is to gain, but what she is to preserve : not merely how she may best improve her situation, but how she is to avert a pressing and immediate danger. In this view, what she gains is the preservation of all the blessings arising from the British constitution, and which are inseparable from her connexion with Great-Britain—blessings, of which it has long been the aim of France, in conjunction with domestic traitors, to deprive her, with a view
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of establishing a Jacobin republic, founded on French influence, and existing only in subserviency to France.'

From the question of general advantage the minister proceeded to specific statements of the benefits which Ireland might derive from the scheme, in point of commerce and manufactures. In this part of his harangue, he had recourse to the recorded sentiments of Mr. Foster, who, in the year 1785, speaking of the peculiar importance of ensuring the continuance of those commercial advantages which Ireland at that time held only at the discretion of this country, affirmed that the Irish products annually received in Britain were of the value of two millions and a half, while the British products sent to Ireland only amounted to one million; whence he inferred, that the adoption of the propositions of that year, by securing such benefits, would have been highly expedient. 'This conclusion (said Mr. Pitt) is perfectly just; and I do not think I can more forcibly reply to a person who now declares that the ruin of the linen trade of Ireland is likely to be the consequence of an union, than by opposing to him his own opinion; an opinion which I can strengthen by stating, that the progress of commercial advantage to Ireland since the year 1785 renders his argument still more applicable.—The trade is at this time infinitely more advantageous to Ireland. It can be proved, that the manufactures exported to that country from Britain in 1797 very little exceeded a million sterling (the articles of produce amounted to nearly the same sum); while Britain, on the other hand, imported from Ireland to the amount of near three millions in the manufactured articles of linen and linen yarn, and between two and three millions in provisions and cattle, besides corn and other articles of produce.

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‘ Among the circumstances beneficial to Ireland, I may add, that articles which are essential to her trade and to her subsistence, or serve as raw materials for her manufactures, are sent from this country free of duty, while all that we take back from that island is liable to a duty on exportation. The increasing produce of the chief article of manufacture in Ireland, and four-fifths of her whole export trade, are to be ascribed, not to her independent legislature, but to the liberality of the British parliament. It is by the free admission of linen for our market, and the bounties granted by the British parliament on its re-exportation, that the trade in that article has been brought to the height at which we now see it. To the parliament of this kingdom, therefore, Ireland owes the favor, that a market has been opened for her linen to the amount of three millions. By the bounty which we give, we afford her a double market, and (what is still more striking and important) we have prevented a competition against her, arising from the superior cheapness of the linen-manufactures of the continent, by subjecting their importation to a duty of thirty per cent. Nothing would more clearly shew what would be the danger to Ireland from the competition in the principal branches of the linen trade, than the simple fact, that we even now import foreign linens, under this heavy duty, to an amount equal to a seventh part of all that Ireland is able to send us, with the preference that has been stated. By this arrangement alone, we must be considered, either as foregoing between seven and eight hundred thousand pounds per annum in revenue, which we should collect if we chose to levy the same duty on all linens, Irish as well as foreign, or, on the other hand, as sacrificing perhaps at least a million sterling in the price paid for those articles

articles by the subjects of this country, which might be saved, if we should allow the importation of all linen, foreign as well as Irish, equally free from duty.'

After ulterior reference to the opinion of Mr. Foster, respecting the expediency of a more intimate commercial connexion, Mr. Pitt thus continued his remarks:

'I am, at least, secure from the design of appearing to deliver any partial or chimerical opinion of my own, when I thus state, on the authority of a person the best informed, and who then judged dispassionately, both the infinite importance to Ireland of securing permanently the great commercial advantages which she now holds at the discretion of Great-Britain, and the additional benefit that she would derive from any settlement which should gradually open to her a still more free and complete intercourse with this country. While I state thus strongly the commercial advantages to the sister kingdom, I have no apprehension of exciting any sentiment of jealousy here. The inhabitants of Great-Britain, I know, wish well to the prosperity of Ireland; and, if the kingdoms are really and solidly united, they feel that to increase the commercial wealth of one country is not to diminish that of the other, but to increase the strength and power of both. To justify that sentiment, however, we must be satisfied that the wealth which we are pouring into the lap of Ireland is not every day liable to be snatched from us, and thrown into the scale of the enemy. If, therefore, Ireland is to continue, as I trust it will for ever, an essential part of the integral strength of the British empire; if her strength is to be permanently ours, and our strength to be hers; neither I, nor any English minister, can ever be deterred by the fear of creating jealousy

jealousy in the hearts of Englishmen from stating the advantages of a closer connexion, or from giving any assistance to the commercial prosperity of that kingdom.

‘ If I should ever have the misfortune to witness the melancholy moment when such principles must be abandoned, when all hope of seeing Ireland permanently and securely connected with this country shall be at an end, I shall at least have the consolation of knowing, that it will not be the want of temper or forbearance, of conciliation, of kindness, or of full explanation on our part, which will have produced an event so fatal to Ireland, and so dangerous to Great-Britain. If the overbearing power of prejudice and passion shall ever produce that fatal consequence, it will too late be perceived and acknowledged, that all the great commercial advantages which Ireland at present enjoys, and which are continually increasing, are to be ascribed to the liberal conduct, the fostering care, of the British empire, extended to the sister kingdom as to a part of ourselves, and not (as has been fallaciously and vainly pretended) to any thing which has been done or can be done by the independent power of her legislature.’

Having thus assigned his reasons for recommending the scheme of incorporation, the premier thought it necessary to notice some objections which had been urged, particularly those which related to parliamentary competency, and to the loss of the independence of the Hibernian realm. He first declared his readiness to enter at any time into a full discussion of the question of competency, and then said, ‘ For the present I will assume, that no man can deny the competency of the parliament of Ireland (representing, as it does,

does, in the language of our constitution, "*lawfully, fully, and freely, all the estates of the people of the realm*") to make laws to bind the people, unless he is disposed to distinguish that parliament from the parliament of Great-Britain, and, while he maintains the independence of the Irish legislature, yet denies to it the lawful and essential powers of parliament. No man, who maintains the parliament of Ireland to be co-equal with our own, can deny its competency on this question, unless he means to go so far as to deny, at the same moment, the whole of the authority of the parliament of Great-Britain—to shake every principle of legislation—and to maintain, that every thing done by parliament, or sanctioned by its authority, however sacred, however beneficial, is neither more nor less than an act of usurpation. He must not only deny the validity of the union between Scotland and England, but must deny the authority of every one of the proceedings of the united legislature since the union; nay, he must go still farther, and deny the authority under which we now sit and deliberate here.

‘ This point is of so much importance, that I think I ought not to suffer the opportunity to pass, without illustrating more fully what I mean. If this principle of the incompetency of parliament to the decision of the measure be admitted, or if it be contended that parliament has no legitimate authority to discuss and decide upon it, you will be driven to the necessity of recognising a principle, the most dangerous that ever was adopted in any civilised state; I mean the principle, that parliament cannot adopt any measure new in its nature, and of great importance, without appealing to the constituent and delegating authority for directions.

If that doctrine be true, look to what an extent it will carry you. If such an argument could be maintained, you acted without any legitimate authority when you created the representation of the principality of Wales, or of either of the counties palatine of England. Every law that parliament ever made without that appeal, either as to its own frame and constitution, as to the qualification of the electors or the elected, as to the great and fundamental point of the succession to the crown, was a breach of treaty, and an act of usurpation.

‘ If we turn to Ireland itself, what do gentlemen think of the power of that parliament, which, without any fresh delegation from its protestant constituents, associated to itself all the catholic electors, and thus destroyed a fundamental distinction on which it was formed? God forbid that I should object to any of these measures! I am only stating the extent to which the principle (that parliament has no authority to decide upon the present measure) will lead; and, if it be admitted in one case, it must be admitted in all. Will any man say, that (although a protestant parliament in Ireland, chosen exclusively by protestant constituents, has by its own inherent power, and without consulting those constituents, admitted and comprehended the catholics, who were till then, in fact, a separate community) a parliament cannot associate itself with another protestant community, represented by a protestant parliament, having one interest with itself, and similar in its laws, its constitution, and its established religion? What must be said by those who have been friends to any plan of parliamentary reform, and particularly to such as have been most recently brought forward, either in Great-Britain or Ireland? Whatever may have been thought of the propriety of the measure, I never heard
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any doubt of the competency of parliament to consider and discuss it. Yet I defy any man to maintain the principle of those plans, without contending, that, as a member of the legislature, he possesses a right to concur in disfranchising those who sent him to parliament, and to select others, by whom he was not elected, in their stead. I am sure that no sufficient distinction, in point of principle, can be successfully maintained for a single moment; nor should I deem it necessary to dwell on this point, were I not convinced that it is connected in part with all those false and dangerous notions on the subject of government which have lately become too prevalent in the world. It may, in fact, be traced to that gross perversion of the principles of all political society, which rests on the supposition that there exists continually in every government a sovereignty *in abeyance* (as it were) on the part of the people, ready to be called forth on every occasion, or rather on every pretence, when it may suit the purposes of the party or faction who are the advocates of this doctrine to suppose an occasion for its exertion. It is in these false principles that are contained the seeds of all the misery, desolation, and ruin, which in the present day have spread themselves over so large a portion of the habitable globe.

‘ These principles are, at length, so well known and understood in their practical effects, that they can no longer hope for one enlightened or intelligent advocate, when they appear in their true colors. Yet, with all the horror that we feel, in common with the rest of the world, at the effect of such opinions; with all the confirmed and increasing love and veneration which we feel towards the constitution of our country, founded as it is, both in theory and experience,

on principles directly opposite; there are too many among us, who, while they abhor and reject such positions, when presented to them in their naked deformity, suffer them in a disguised shape to be gradually infused into their minds, and insensibly to influence and bias their sentiments and arguments on the greatest and most important discussions. This concealed poison is now more to be dreaded than any open attempt to support such principles by argument or to enforce them by arms. No society, whatever be its particular form, can long subsist, if this principle should be once admitted. In every government, there must reside a supreme, absolute, and unlimited authority. This is equally true of every lawful monarchy, of every aristocracy, of every pure democracy (if indeed such a form of government ever has existed or ever can exist), and of those constitutions formed and compounded from the others, which we are justly inclined to prefer to any of them. In all these governments that power may be abused; but, whether the abuse is such as to justify and call for the interference of the people collectively, or of any portion of the community, must always be an extreme case, and a question of the greatest and most perilous responsibility, not in law only, but in conscience and in duty, to all those who either act upon it themselves, or persuade others to do so. But no provision for such a case ever has been or can be made before-hand; it forms no chapter in any known code of laws; it can find no place in any system of human jurisprudence. If such a principle can make no part of any established constitution, even of those where the government is so framed as to be most liable to the abuse of its powers, it will be preposterous to suppose that it can be admitted in

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one where those powers are so distributed and balanced as to furnish the best security against the probability of such an abuse. Shall that principle be sanctioned as a necessary part of the best government, which cannot be admitted to exist as an established check even upon the worst? Pregnant as it is with danger and confusion, shall it be received and authorised in proportion as every reason which can ever make it necessary to recur to it is unlikely to exist? Yet I know not how it is, that, in proportion as we are less likely to have occasion for so desperate a remedy; in proportion as a government is so framed as to provide within itself the best guard and control on the exercise of every branch of authority, to furnish the means of preventing or correcting every abuse of power, and to secure, by its own natural operation, a due attention to the interest and feelings of every part of the community; in that very proportion persons have been found so perverse as to imagine, that this species of constitution admits and recognises a principle which is inconsistent with the nature of any government, and above all inapplicable to our own.

‘ I have said more on this subject than I should have thought necessary, if I had not felt that this false and dangerous mockery of the *sovereignty of the people* is one of the chief elements of jacobinism, one of the favorite impostures calculated to mislead the understanding, and to flatter and inflame the passions of the mass of mankind, who have not the opportunity of examining and exposing it; and that as such, on every occasion, and in every shape in which it appears, it ought to be combated and resisted by every friend to civil order, and to the peace and happiness of mankind.’

To those politicians who deprecated the loss of national independence, the following observations were addressed: ' Do they mean to assert, that, when the governing powers of two separate countries unite in forming one more extensive empire, the individuals who composed either of the former narrow societies are afterwards less members of an independent state, or, to any valuable and useful purpose, less possessed of political freedom or civil happiness, than they were before? It must be obvious to every gentleman who will look at the subject, in tracing the history of all the countries, the most proud of their present independence, of all the nations in Europe, that not one would have been in the state in which it now exists, if that principle had been acted upon by our forefathers; and Europe must have remained to this hour in a state of ignorance and barbarism, from the perpetual warfare of independent and petty states. In the instance of our own country, it would be a superfluous waste of time to enumerate the steps by which all its parts were formed into one kingdom; but will any man assert, that, in all the unions which have formed the principal states of Europe, their inhabitants have become less free, that they have had less of which they might be proud, less scope for their own exertions, than they had in their former situation? If this doctrine is to be generally maintained, what becomes of the situation at this hour of any one county of England, or of any one county of Ireland, now united under the independent parliament of each kingdom? If it be pushed to its full extent, it is obviously incompatible with all civil society. As the former principle of the sovereignty of the people strikes at the foundation of all governments, so this is equally hostile to all

all political confederacy ; and by its influence mankind must be driven back to what is called the state of nature.

‘ While I combat this general and abstract principle, which would operate as an objection to every union between separate states, on the ground of the sacrifice of independence, do I mean to contend that there is in no case just ground for such a sentiment? Far from it: it may become, on many occasions, the first duty of a free and generous people. If there exists a country which contains within itself the means of military protection and the naval force necessary for its defence ; which furnishes objects of industry sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and pecuniary resources adequate to a dignified maintenance of the rank which it has attained among the nations of the world ; if, above all, it enjoys the blessings of internal content and tranquillity, and possesses a distinct constitution of its own, the defects of which, if any, it is within itself capable of correcting ; if that constitution is equal, if not superior, to any other in the world ; or (which is nearly the same thing) if those who live under it believe it to be so, and fondly cherish that opinion ; I can easily conceive that such a country must be jealous of any measure, which, even by its own consent, under the authority of its own lawful government, is to associate it as a part of a larger and more extensive empire.

‘ But if there be a country which, against the greatest of all dangers that threaten its peace and security, has not adequate means of protecting itself without the aid of another nation ; if that other be a neighbouring and kindred nation, speaking the same language, whose laws and customs are the same in principle, but are carried to a greater degree of perfection, with a more extensive commerce, and more abundant means of acquiring

acquiring and diffusing national wealth ; the stability of whose government, and the excellence of whose constitution, are more than ever the admiration and envy of Europe ; and to which the very country of which we are speaking can only boast an imperfect resemblance ;—under such circumstances, I would ask, what conduct would be prescribed by every rational principle of dignity, of honor, or of interest ? I would ask, whether this is not a faithful description of the circumstances which ought to dispose Ireland to an union, and whether Great-Britain is not precisely the nation with which, on these principles, a country, situated as Ireland is, would desire to unite. Does an union, under such circumstances, by free consent, and on just and equal terms, deserve to be branded as a proposal for subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke ? Is it not rather the free and voluntary association of two great countries, which join, for their common benefit, in one empire, where each will retain its proportional weight and importance, under the security of equal laws, reciprocal affection, and inseparable interests ; and which want nothing but that indissoluble connexion to render both invincible ?

———*Nec Teucris Italos parere jubebo,
Nec nova regna peto : paribus se legibus ambæ
Invictæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant.*

The objection drawn from the injury which Ireland might suffer by the absence of her chief nobility and gentry, who would flock to the imperial metropolis, was obviated by remarking, that, though this effect would take place during a part of the year, the disadvantage would be more than counterbalanced by the operation of the system in other respects.

To prove his assertion, Mr. Pitt thus argued. ‘ If it be true that this measure has an inevitable tendency
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to admit the introduction of that British capital which is most likely to give life to all the operations of commerce, and to all the improvements of agriculture; if it be that which above all other considerations is most likely to give security, quiet, and internal repose to Ireland; if it be likely to remove the chief bar to the internal advancement of wealth and of civilisation, by a more intimate intercourse with England, and to communicate those habits which distinguish this country, and which, by a continued gradation, unite the highest and the lowest orders of the community without a chasm in any part of the system; if it be not only calculated to invite English capital to set commerce in motion, but to offer it the use of new markets, to open fresh resources of wealth and industry; can wealth, can industry, can civilisation increase among the whole bulk of the people without greatly overbalancing the partial effect of the removal of the few individuals who, for a small part of the year, would follow the seat of legislation? If, notwithstanding the absence of the parliament from Dublin, it would still remain the centre of education and of the internal commerce of an improving country; if it would still remain the seat of legal discussion, which must always increase with an increase of property and occupation; will it be supposed, with a view even to the interests of those whose partial interests have been most successfully appealed to, with a view to the respectable body of the bar, to the merchant or shopkeeper of Dublin, that they would not find their proportionate share of advantage in the general benefit of the state? Let it also be remembered, that, if the transfer of the seat of legislature may call from Ireland to England the members of the united parliament, yet, after the union, property, influence, and

and consideration in Ireland, will lead, as much as in Britain, to all the objects of imperial ambition; and there will consequently exist a new incitement to persons to acquire property in that country, and to those who possess it, to reside there and to cultivate the good opinion of those with whom they live, and to extend and improve their influence and connexions.'

On this question, he added, we might refer to experience. The union with Scotland had been as strongly opposed as the present scheme, particularly by those who dreaded the depopulation of that country: but it appeared that Edinburgh had, since the loss of its parliament, more than doubled its population, and that of Glasgow had increased in the proportion of between five and six to one. There was no ground, therefore, for the gloomy apprehensions of depopulation which had been so industriously excited.

To remove the fears of those who apprehended that the commercial privileges now enjoyed by Ireland would be less secure after an union than at present, he observed, that, if the British parliament, unbound by compact, had cherished those privileges amidst an imperfect and precarious connexion, and amidst the jealousies of rival manufacturers, such advantages were more likely to be retained when the union would be complete, and when all grounds of jealousy would give way to a community of interests,

As the adversaries of the union had propagated an idea that the main principle of the measure was to subject Ireland to a load of debt and an increase of taxes, and to expose her to the consequences of all our difficulties and necessities, he judged it necessary to refute this misrepresentation by saying, 'The zeal, the spirit,

spirit, the liberal and enlarged policy of this country, have, I hope, given ample proof that we do not seek an union from pecuniary motives. If it be not desirable on the grounds I have stated, it cannot be recommended for the mere purpose of taxation; but, to quiet any jealousy on this subject, here again let us look to Scotland. Is there any instance where, with forty-five members on her part, and five hundred and thirteen on ours, that part of the united kingdom has paid more than its due proportion to the general burthens? Can it then be apprehended that we shall tax Ireland more heavily when she becomes associated with ourselves? To tax in its due proportion the whole of the empire, to the utter exclusion of the idea of the predominance of one part of society over another, is the great characteristic of British finance, as equality of laws is of the British constitution.

‘ When we come to the details of this proposition, it is in our power to fix, for any number of years which shall be thought fit, the proportion by which the contribution of Ireland to the expences of the state shall be regulated, and to determine that these proportions shall not be such as would make a contribution greater than the amount of its present necessary expences as a separate kingdom. Even after that limited period, the proportion of the whole contribution, from time to time, may be made to depend on the comparative produce, in each country, of such general taxes as may be thought to afford the best criterion of wealth; or the system of internal taxation may gradually be so equalised and assimilated, on the leading articles, as to make all rules of specific proportion unnecessary, and to secure Ireland from being ever taxed but in proportion as we tax ourselves.

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‘The application of these principles, however, will form matter of future discussion ; I mention them only as strongly showing, from the misrepresentation which has taken place on this part of the subject, how incumbent it is upon the house to receive these propositions, and to adopt, after due deliberation, such resolutions as may record to Ireland the terms upon which we are ready to meet her. And, in the mean time, let us wait, not without impatience, but without dissatisfaction, for that moment, when the effect of reason and discussion may reconcile the minds of men, in that kingdom, to a measure which I am sure will be found as necessary for their peace and happiness as it will be conducive to the general security and advantage of the British empire.’

Mr. Pitt then presented to the house eight resolutions which he had prepared, embracing the general plan of union.

- I.—‘In order to promote and secure the essential interests of Great-Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength, power, and resources of the British empire, it will be adviseable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite the two kingdoms of Great-Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, in such manner, and on such terms and conditions, as may be established by acts of the respective parliaments of his majesty’s said kingdoms.
- II.—‘It would be fit to propose as the first article, to serve as a basis of the said union, that the said kingdoms of Great-Britain and Ireland shall, on a day to be agreed upon, be united into one kingdom, by the name of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

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III.—‘ For the same purpose it would be fit to propose, that the succession to the monarchy and the imperial crown of the said united kingdom shall continue limited and settled, in the same manner as the imperial crown of the said kingdoms of Great-Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing laws, and to the terms of the union between England and Scotland.

IV.—‘ For the same purpose it would be fit to propose, that the said united kingdom be represented in one and the same parliament, to be styled the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland; and that such a number of lords spiritual and temporal, and such a number of members of the house of commons, as shall be hereafter agreed upon by acts of the respective parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said parliament on the part of Ireland, and shall be summoned, chosen, and returned, in such manner as shall be fixed by an act of the parliament of Ireland previous to the said union; and that every member hereafter to sit and vote in the said parliament of the united kingdom shall, until the said parliament shall otherwise provide, take and subscribe the same oaths, and make the same declarations, as are by law required to be taken, subscribed, and made, by the members of the parliaments of Great-Britain and Ireland.

V.—‘ For the same purpose it would be fit to propose, that the churches of England and Ireland, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, shall be preserved as now by law established.

VI.—‘ For the same purpose it would be fit to propose, that his majesty’s subjects in Ireland shall at all times hereafter be entitled to the same privileges, and
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be on the same footing in respect of trade and navigation, in all ports and places belonging to Great-Britain, and in all cases with respect to which treaties shall be made by his majesty, his heirs or successors, with any foreign power, as his majesty's subjects in Great-Britain; that no duty shall be imposed on the import or export between Great-Britain and Ireland of any articles now duty-free; and that on other articles there shall be established, for a time to be limited, such a moderate rate of equal duties as shall, previous to the union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective parliaments, subject, after the expiration of such limited time, to be diminished equally with respect to both kingdoms, but in no case to be increased; that all articles which may at any time hereafter be imported into Great-Britain from foreign parts, shall be importable through either kingdom into the other, subject to the duties and regulations as if the same were imported directly from foreign parts; that where any articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of either kingdom, are subject to any internal duty in one kingdom, such countervailing duties (over and above any duties on import to be fixed as aforesaid) shall be imposed as shall be necessary to prevent any inequality in that respect; and that all other matters of trade and commerce other than the foregoing, and than such others as may before the union be specially agreed upon for the due encouragement of the agriculture and manufactures of the respective kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from time to time by the united parliament.

VII.—For the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that the charge arising from the payment of the interest

terest, or sinking fund for the reduction of the principal, of the debt incurred in either kingdom before the union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great-Britain and Ireland respectively; that, for a number of years to be limited, the future ordinary expences of the united kingdom, in peace or war, shall be defrayed by Great-Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective parliaments previous to the union; and that, after the expiration of the time to be so limited, the proportion shall not be liable to be varied, except according to such rates and principles as shall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the union.

VIII.—‘ For the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that all laws in force at the time of the union, and all the courts of civil or ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the respective kingdoms, shall remain as now by law established within the same, subject only to such alterations or regulations from time to time as circumstances may appear to the parliament of the united kingdom to require.’

An address was intended to accompany the resolutions, stating that the commons had proceeded with great zeal to the consideration of the important objects recommended in the royal message; that they entertained a firm persuasion of the probable benefits of a complete union between Great-Britain and Ireland, founded on equal and liberal principles; and that they were therefore induced to lay before his majesty such propositions as appeared to them to be best calculated to form the basis of such a settlement, leaving it to his wisdom, in due time and in a proper manner, to communicate

nicate them to the lords and commons of Ireland, with whom they would be at all times ready to concur in all such measures as might be found most conducive to the accomplishment of this great and salutary work.

Mr. SHERIDAN, having cautioned the house against the seductive force of the minister's oratorical talents, which, he was apprehensive, might mislead the less judicious part of the assembly into an assent or concurrence that cool reason would condemn, renewed his protest against the scheme of union. He contended, that, in the present state of Ireland, it was not only impolitic but unsafe to urge the discussion of a scheme which would affect the independence of a spirited people. It was a bold experiment, he said, to drive a whole nation into a measure of so delicate and so important a nature. There would perhaps be greater difficulty than the court expected to find, in rendering the Irish insensible of the duty which they owed to themselves, of the rights of the present generation and interests of the race yet unborn, and of the ambition, arrogance, and tyranny, of those who should inflict the blow or direct the torture. The minister might have secured his minions; but it would be expedient for him to measure his power by the force of his antagonists, and, in estimating his means of victory, to seek an antidote against national pride and local attachments. The consideration of the fate of the question, when it was lately agitated in Ireland, might reasonably induce him to desist from the prosecution of the scheme; but, as he had solemnly pledged himself for the exertion of his most strenuous efforts to produce an union of the two kingdoms, it might be apprehended that he would pursue his course in defiance of every obstacle, would make use of artifice to gain his point, flatter and de-

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lude the Irish; and, by seeming to respect their declared opinion, lull them into inactivity, the more completely to subject them to slavery. But his scheme, though artfully planned, might not be successful: the delusion might recoil on the author, and involve him in the disgrace and ruin which he had prepared for others. By the pledge in question, he would place Ireland and Great-Britain in a very perilous situation. He seemed willing to put his power in competition with the force of opinion in Ireland, and to stake his existence as a minister against the independence of that kingdom. But the house, Mr. Sheridan hoped, would not be so inconsiderate as to adopt the system now recommended; a system which would cherish animosity and discord, where affection ought to be conciliated and harmony established; which would sow dissension between the commons and the peers of Ireland—irritate the whole parliament by holding it up to view as a feeble and inefficient body, duped by English factions—and array the British house of commons against that of another realm governed by the same sovereign.

The minister having accused Mr. Foster of inconsistency, in having supported the propositions of 1785, as necessary for securing the connexion between the realms, and yet opposing an incorporative union, Mr. Sheridan vindicated the Hibernian statesman from the charge, by saying that he might reasonably wish for an amicable connexion, without depriving his country of her independence.

That part of Mr. Pitt's speech which seemed to menace the Irish with a loss of their commercial advantages, if they should not agree to an union, produced strong animadversions. It was evident from such hints, said his present opponent, that he hoped to carry his

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point by intimidation ; but this was not the line of conduct which a wise or upright minister would pursue. That this was his meaning, another passage served to evince. Ireland, it was said, ought to consent to the union, because she was incapable of defending herself against a foreign enemy without the aid and protection of her powerful neighbour. Did not this imply, that our protection would be withdrawn, unless she should accede to our proposals ? Was it generous or just to treat her in this imperious manner ? If her condition were really as deplorable as it was stated to be, the house ought to be informed from what misconduct such evils had arisen, amidst the advantages which God and nature had bestowed upon her. It might be concluded, indeed, that her poverty was chiefly occasioned by the narrow unwise policy of Britain—a policy which, he was glad to find, the minister now disapproved. Her weakness, perhaps, was not so great as it was supposed to be ; and, if it were, it was ungenerous to insult her. Such an insult would not have been offered to her while her volunteers were in arms. Before she was reproached with her inability of defence, it ought to be considered, that, if 40,000 men had been sent from this country to her assistance, she had furnished myriads of her gallant sons to fight our battles and bleed in our support. But now, forsooth, her weakness exposed her to invasion ; and, while the premier thus argued, he also seemed to feel that the same weakness left her at his mercy, and he would avail himself of it to enforce her acquiescence in an union.

Mr. Sheridan then made some remarks (similar to those which we reported in our account of his former speech) on the dismissal of several of the servants of the crown in Ireland ; again accused the ministry of intimidation and abuse—

abuse of power ; reproved Mr. Canning for ‘ pleading the cause of bold and barefaced corruption, and thus clouding and contaminating with its foul fog and baneful breath the pure morning of his political life ;’ and censured, as wanton and unnecessary, Mr. Pitt’s pledge for the prosecution of his favorite measure.

He afterwards animadverted on the conduct of the court in the dispute respecting the treatment of the catholics of Ireland. A lord-lieutenant, he said, had been sent over to that kingdom to allay animosities, and gratify the more numerous part of the nation. The cup of concession was presented to the lips of the catholics ; but, when they were on the point of tasting, it was dashed in their faces, and the new viceroy was recalled. Was this a proper prelude or introduction to an union ? Would not men thus provoked and irritated question the sincerity of our cabinet, and reject its offers as insidious ?

In reply to the observations of Mr. Pitt on the adjustment of the year 1782, he maintained that it was intended to be final with regard to the constitution of Ireland ; but he admitted that some regulations, chiefly commercial, were to have been proposed for the improvement of the connexion between the kingdoms. It was, he said, absurd to suppose, that, immediately after an acknowledgement of the Hibernian claim of independence, a resolution could have been adopted which might have the effect of defeating that claim. Every regulation which the cabinet of that day intended to bring forward was to be consistent with, not destructive of, the independence of Ireland.

As the minister had charged Mr. Fox with negligence in not executing the resolution which promised ulterior measures, Mr. Sheridan alleged the short con-

tinuance of that gentleman in office as the cause of the delay; adding, that one who had been in office for a much longer period, and who affected to be fully convinced of the necessity of farther arrangements, adduced such a charge with a very ill grace, as he must have had frequent opportunities of strengthening the connexion, though perhaps he did not think any former time so convenient as the present, when Ireland appeared to be at his mercy.

The assertions respecting the number of Irish who wished for an union were not well founded. A considerable majority of the peers, indeed, were inclined to promote it; but, in the house of commons, the court had little reason to boast of its success, as, notwithstanding the apparent plurality of votes for the measure, the far greater number of independent members were adverse to it; and, out of parliament, the approvers of it were very few. The inhabitants of Cork, it was said, were friendly to the scheme, and those of Limerick were likewise disposed to favor it: but had not, Mr. Sheridan asked, the lure of a dock-yard been thrown out to the former, and a menace to the latter on the subject of the linen-trade? Thus, while some were to be bribed, others were to be intimidated into compliance. The catholics were among those to whom favors were promised; but might not they be gratified without an union? and might not every advantage which was mentioned as the probable result of the scheme be afforded without its adoption?

The argument drawn from the danger of a contrariety of opinion between the parliaments of the two countries deserved little notice. For a hundred years they had co-operated on almost every occasion; and, if they should differ, the inconvenience would not be
very

very material. As well might it be said, that, because two houses of parliament in one country may obstruct and oppose each other, it would be good policy to form them into one assembly, as that the eventual disagreement of two parliaments demanded the remedy of an union. Such reasoning might be called a libel on the constitution.

That the ignorance of the Irish and their want of civilisation required an incorporation with a country which might improve them, this speaker would not allow. Those evils, he said, undeniably existed; but one chief cause was, that men of great property did not, as in Great-Britain, associate in a certain degree with the lower classes. As a remedy for evils arising from the absence of the great landholders, it might easily be conceived that an absentee government would not be very efficacious.

The case of Scotland, he added, ought not to be urged as an argument for an union, unless it could be proved that the prosperity which that country had enjoyed *since* its union with England had really flowed *from* it. It might be argued with confidence and plausibility, from the general improvement which had taken place in the course of the century, that North-Britain would have equally prospered without an union; and, as Ireland, since she shook off her ignominious dependence, had flourished more than in former periods, it might be supposed that her prosperity would increase without the proposed incorporation.

French principles having been, as usual, introduced into the debate, he asked, what was the Jacobinism against which the minister so loudly exclaimed? Did it not tend to violate the rights and inheritance of a nation, under the pretence of making it free? Did it not

imperiously demand from a community a resignation of constitutional freedom and independence, with a promise of advantageous substitution and striking improvement? If so, might not the proposer of the present measure be considered as acting the part of an arch-jacobin?

He concluded with reading two propositions, to which, he thought, no true friend of either country would object. They were couched in these terms: 'that no measures can have a tendency to improve and perpetuate the ties of amity and connexion now existing between Great-Britain and Ireland, which have not for their basis the manifest, fair, and free consent and approbation of the parliaments of the two countries;' and, 'that whoever shall endeavour to obtain the appearance of such consent and approbation in either country, by employing the influence of government for the purpose of corruption or of intimidation, is an enemy to his majesty and to the constitution.'

Lord HAWKESBURY imputed some inconsistency to Mr. Sheridan for having proposed, during the rebellion, an inquiry into the conduct of the Irish government, and now condemning an interference much more reasonable and justifiable than that which had been recommended by himself. He animadverted on the charge of intimidation, affirming that it was inapplicable to the proceedings of the ministry in the present case; denied that any corruption had been practised; and represented the dismissal of anti-unionists from office as a proof of the sincerity of the premier in the prosecution of an important measure, which, for the public good, he wished all his associates to support. He controverted the finality of the adjustment of the year 1782, urged the necessity of a speedy and more effective

effective settlement, and declared his conviction of the superiority of a legislative union to all other means of cementing the connexion between the realms. The case of the regency, he said, demonstrated the inconvenience of having two parliaments under the same head: the independence of each might have been productive of great injury, and have even led to a separation of Ireland from the sway of the British sovereign. The radical evils of the present government, he added, could not be completely removed without an union. It would allay the jealousies of the catholics and the protestants, promote in every respect the prosperity of Ireland, and add to the strength and respectability of the whole empire. The Irish, he trusted, would see it in the same point of view, whenever they should be disposed to give the subject a fair and full discussion.

Dr. LAURENCE conjured the house to relinquish the consideration of the scheme of union, as the discussion could answer no good purpose, and might be productive of serious mischief, while a high degree of irritation pervaded the public mind in Ireland. The measure, he said, was not necessary at the present moment, even if it promised to be more beneficial than he had reason to think that it would be. The settlement of 1782 might be considered as adequate to the political wants of the Irish; and it was the opinion of Mr. Burke, that, as to every constitutional purpose, the agreement was final and conclusive, though the mercantile concerns of the two countries might require some new arrangements.

The speech of the ingenious civilian was much longer than our readers would from this sketch suppose it to have been; but, as it was rather calculated to repress discussion than to exhibit a full view of the sub-

ject, we may fairly be excused from amplitude of detail.

The question being put, whether the speaker should leave the chair, that Mr. Pitt's propositions might be referred to a committee of the whole house, a division ensued, when the affirmative votes were 140, while only 15 members took the opposite side. After a short conversation, the chairman reported progress, and the house adjourned.

CHAP. IV.

Debate upon a Motion from Mr. Sheridan—Ulterior Discussion of the Union in the House of Commons—Proposal of a Substitute for a legislative Union—Debate in a Committee—Adoption of the Resolutions proposed by the Minister.

THE decisive majority of suffrages, by which the minister secured every object that he wished to accomplish, did not desert him on this momentous question. The cavils of opposition were disregarded; just or plausible objections were evaded; and the prospect of a complete victory encouraged him to a prosecution of his aims. Having allowed the interval of a week for the private consideration of those articles of union which he had prepared, he, on the 7th of February, proposed a public deliberation upon the subject, by moving that the house should resolve itself into a committee; but, before it was formed, he was willing to dispose of the promised motions respecting the fair and free consent of both parliaments.

Mr. SHERIDAN then renewed his opposition to the scheme. Since the last meeting, he said, many gentlemen had been induced to alter their opinions, and to agree with him on the impropriety and the danger of persisting in a measure which was highly obnoxious to the people of Ireland; and, as the house had not pledged itself to the support of it, it was not too late to check the rashness of its zealous advocates. The minister might wish to pursue it against the sense of a nation;

nation; but the house ought to be so far guided by prudence and judgement as to disregard all his persuasions, and rescue the empire from the peril in which he would involve it. It was curious to observe the coincidence of his views and declarations, in several instances, with those of a party to which he was not generally suspected of being attached. He agreed with the United Irishmen, said Mr. Sheridan, in wishing to destroy the obnoxious constitution of Ireland. *They* alleged that the parliament of that kingdom had occasioned all the evils which afflicted the country: *he* adduced a similar charge against that body. *They* represented the Irish legislators as being the dupes of British faction: *he* imputed all the errors of the government, all the distractions and misfortunes of Ireland, to the same source—to the sway of a party, at the head of which was his friend the duke of Portland, and to which another of his present associates (Mr. Windham) belonged. Both were ready to exclaim, *Delenda est Carthago*, though they differed in the mode of destruction, as the United Irishmen wished to depose their parliament, and establish a republic with foreign aid, while the premier wished to merge the delinquent legislature in that of Great-Britain. In the pursuit of their aims, those mal-contents had recourse to menace and intimidation: he did not scruple to adopt means equally improper. But the British parliament, it might be hoped, would not sanction such proceedings. Some members of a pugnacious temper, *amateurs* of the art of pugilism, might not wish to separate the contending parties, but would rather see them continue the conflict. The secretary at war had been represented as fond of pugilistic amusement; yet it would be unfair to suppose that he would promote a battle between his friend the chancellor of the exchequer

quer and the Irish parliament. The contest, however, would not be uninteresting. Each party had two allies. Corruption and intimidation were those of the minister; honor and resolution were those of the parliament and people of Ireland.

After some observations resembling those of his preceding speeches, Mr. Sheridan proposed a middle course between the existing system of Irish government and an incorporative union. He recommended a resort to upright measures, the adoption of a plan of honest incorrupt administration. Such a remedy as this had never been tried; and the present conjuncture was particularly favorable for the experiment. It would not loosen the connexion between the countries, but promised a contrary effect. If the minister would cease to make the Irish government a corrupt English job, if he would give the Irish parliament an opportunity of acting freely for the benefit of the nation, the real evils of the country, which a legislative union might augment, would be in a great measure allayed, if not totally extinguished. The alternative was not, as had been asserted, that of union or entire separation. The medium which he proposed would render the former scheme unnecessary, and prevent the latter contingency.

There was no novelty in the remainder of Mr. Sheridan's speech, if we except his animadversions on an argument of lord Hawkesbury, who had mentioned the probability of more frequent visits from the Irish gentry to their estates in consequence of the union, with a view of conciliating the regard of the electors. Was not this, he asked, an insinuation that those gentlemen would be wonderfully changed even by the prospect of a seat in the imperial parliament, and would become kinder

kinder landlords and better neighbours in proportion as their legislative duties would place them at a greater distance from their estates? This was surely, he said, a singular argument. Having exhibited this mode of reasoning in a ludicrous point of view, he returned to the immediate subject of his propositions, and re-urged the propriety of assenting to them.

Mr. PITT, in a short speech, protested against the adoption of the proposed resolutions. One, he said, was so self-evident, that it claimed instant assent; yet it was not necessary for the house to record it. If it were merely the declaration of a truth without leading to any useful purpose, there would not be a sufficient motive for adopting it; and there would be still less reason to entertain it, when it should appear to contain practical falsehood under the form of literal truth; for it implied, that the measure was to be carried into effect without the fair and free consent of parliament. The second proposition tended to stigmatise every minister whose persuasions should procure the dismissal of officers of the crown on account of a difference of sentiment upon any great political question. This practice, however, was justifiable: it arose out of the very nature of regular government, and might be considered as necessary for the public service.

Mr. GREY was not convinced, by the arguments of the last speaker, of the impropriety of recording the propositions of his friend on the journals of the house; they would serve as pledges, he said, for the honorable intentions of the British government, and allay the jealousy of the Irish nation. With regard to the vindicated practice of dismissal, he asked why Mr. Pitt had not discarded those officers of government who differed from him when he proposed a plan of parliamentary reform,

reform, or when he recommended an abolition of the slave trade. This forbearance, upon his own principles, afforded reason for doubting his sincerity.

On a division, the motions of Mr. Sheridan were exploded by a majority of 116, the numbers being 25 and 141.

The committee was on the point of being formed for the discussion of Mr. Pitt's propositions, when

The honorable Mr. SAINT-JOHN rose, and conjured the house to dismiss the question for the present, as the agitation of it might be productive of mischievous consequences. Even if the measure promised great benefits to the Irish, it would be impolitic, he said, to prosecute it in the irritated state of their minds. He would not enter into the merits of the scheme; but he thought that the advantages which its patrons held out might be obtained without it. Ireland had comparatively flourished since the declaration of her independence; and it might be presumed that her prosperity would not decline in these enlightened times. He applauded the spirit which one part of her parliament had lately displayed, and hoped that it would continue to resist arbitrary influence. He called upon those who had contended against parliamentary reform as being hazardously unseasonable, to oppose on the same ground a scheme which included a material innovation in that respect; and he deprecated that ministerial pertinacity which might produce an alarming disunion, if not a renewal of rebellion.

Mr. GREY, though he wished to have heard some plausible arguments in favor of the measure before the delivery of his own sentiments, would not on that account postpone his observations. He considered the question as the most momentous that had ever been submitted

submitted to the deliberation of parliament, either in point of constitutional right or of public policy; but, as one of the parties whose consent was necessary had declared against it, he recommended a suspension of the scheme. Far from having the smallest objection to an improvement of the connexion between the kingdoms, he was earnestly desirous of the prevalence of the most cordial harmony, of the establishment of an effective union—not an union of parliaments, but of hearts, of affections, and interests—of vigor, of ardor, of zeal for the general welfare. No other connexion than one of this species, he said, would augment the strength or promote the security of the empire. The scheme which was now offered seemed to be of a very different tendency. It threatened discontent, jealousy, and distrust. These were the fruits which it had already produced in Ireland, and which would perhaps grow into a warmth of resentment, if it should not be deferred or abandoned. If the parliament of that realm should give an exterior assent to the measure, the people would still say that they were robbed of their rights, and would anxiously wait for an opportunity of recovering them.

The minister, said Mr. Grey, had by no means proved the necessity of the measure. He had mentioned the existence of great evils in Ireland, and had spoken of the inconvenience and danger of a separate parliament; but he could not prove that the evils had arisen from the independence of the legislature. He had accused some of his opponents of inconsistency in praising the conduct of a parliament which they had formerly condemned; but there was no impropriety in applauding a casual instance of spirit or public virtue in an assembly which had long been governed by corruption.

ruption. It was more extraordinary that one who was supposed to have long had a decisive influence over that legislature, and who regarded it as an upright and respectable senate when it concurred with him, should now pronounce it so corrupt as to be incapable of amendment.

The evils in question might be imputed to the misconduct of government rather than to the separation of the parliaments; and for these the prime minister was responsible, unless he should be able to prove that obnoxious measures had been forced upon him by the sturdy dispositions of the Irish members. Who had fostered the religious dissensions and political feuds which distracted the nation? Who had raised hopes, and disappointed those hopes? Who had excited alarms, and created discontent? The directors of the British cabinet, said Mr. Grey, had produced or promoted evils; and now, on pretence of removing these grievances, they were proceeding to annihilate the liberties of Ireland. The good temper which the Irish manifested in the year 1782, not only in point of public spirit but of religious toleration, had been in a great degree spoiled; and other feelings had been excited in their bosoms. The prospect of additional favors to the catholics had given pleasure to liberal men of all denominations: but a party, not distinguished by talents or by real dignity, fomented animosity and intolerance, and procured by intrigue a dereliction of the system of concession. From that moment affairs wore a gloomy aspect; and the consequences were violent and disastrous.

The account given by this speaker of the adjustment of 1782 agreed with the declarations of Mr. Sheridan on that topic; and the authority of Mr. Foster was adduced

duced in support of its finality in a constitutional view. A passage in a former speech of Mr. Pitt was also quoted for the same purpose, though it did not strongly favor Mr. Grey's argument.

Not only on the ground of that settlement, but also on considerations of prudence and policy, he opposed the union of the two parliaments. The danger of a continued separation did not appear to him to be great or formidable. The case of the regency, which had been so confidently stated, did not strike him very forcibly. Though one legislature had assigned to the regent the whole power of government, and the other had imposed restrictions on him, they did not really differ so much as it might at the first view appear. In this country a considerable center of power and of influence, beside what was properly called government, was attached to the sovereignty, at the case was not the same in Ireland. When a regent was voted in that kingdom, therefore, the parliament had less to give; a circumstance which tended to diminish the disparity of the respective grants. To the allegation of an eventual difference in the person of the regent, he merely replied, that it was an extreme case. For all the ordinary purposes of government, there was not, he added, the least probability of a material variance between the parliaments upon any practical measure.

Being fully convinced that the evils of Ireland had not their root in an independent parliament, and that the minister's plan would not operate as a remedy, he hoped that the constitution of that kingdom might be suffered to remain unimpaired. He was confident that the investigation of the scheme could not be of the least service, and might lead to a calamitous disunion.

Mr.

Mr. *Secretary* DUNDAS commenced a long speech with observing, that the arguments so strenuously urged against the union did not prevent him from rising with a considerable degree of confidence to controvert every objection. The reasons adduced by Mr. Grey, he said, were totally groundless ; and the discussion of the transactions of the year 1782 might well have been spared, as being irrelevant to the present question, which did not derogate from the acknowledged independence of the Irish parliament, being a proposal for the incorporation of the two legislatures, without violating the liberty or the independence of either. The measure itself, he added, far from operating injuriously on Ireland, would increase the political and commercial advantages of that country in the same proportion as those of Scotland had been improved by the union. That ‘a spirit of calumny and dissension, of treachery and treason,’ menacing the overthrow of the government, existed in Ireland, no one, he thought, would have the boldness to deny ; and, as the influence of widely-extended conspiracies endangered the connexion between the countries, an immediate interference was necessary to rescue the western realm from the intrigues of the common enemy. The question was, whether an incorporation of the parliaments of the two kingdoms would not be the most effectual remedy for the evils to which he alluded. This question he could, without hesitation, answer in the affirmative. For a due regulation of the affairs of any community, a mutual confidence ought to subsist between the governors and the governed ; but this was not the case in Ireland, where the great body of the people did not repose in the parliament that confidence which was essential to its utility. The reasons of that defect grew out of the

frame and constitution of that parliament. The whole power of the country being vested in a fourth part of the nation, and that fourth being separated from the rest by religious distinctions, heightened and envenomed by ancient and hereditary animosities, it was impossible that a proper confidence could exist between them. For the establishment of such a confidence, the grant of a free participation of all the privileges of Britons, by the superintending care of an imperial parliament, would be the most efficacious measure. The protestants would then lay aside their jealousies and distrust, being certain that against any attempt to endanger their establishment the whole strength of the united legislature would be exerted; and, on the other hand, the catholics would expect that their cause would be candidly and impartially considered by a general parliament, the great body of which would be relieved from the apprehensions and animosities interwoven with the constitution of the existing legislature. It by no means followed that either the independence of Ireland or the liberty of the people would be destroyed by an union, as there would still be the three estates of king, lords, and commons, and a sufficient proportion of the aristocracy and democracy of the different countries. It ought to be recollected, that, with all the boasted independence of the Irish parliament, it could not give vigor or effect to its acts, before they should be approved by the third estate, a sovereign resident in England: it therefore could not, in strictness of speech, be styled independent. It was also worthy of notice, that from one of the most valuable privileges enjoyed by the British parliament (that of controlling the conduct of the executive government, even in the exercise of the most undoubted prerogatives of the crown) the legislature of Ireland

Ireland was debarred; and this observation was the more striking, when it was considered that this power of the parliament of Great-Britain could control the third estate of the Hibernian parliament, even in its legislative capacity, exclusively of the other constituent parts of that body. It was impossible candidly and dispassionately to attend to these considerations, and not feel how extensively the character and importance of the Irish parliament would be exalted by the union of the two legislatures.

In opposition to that pride which still cherished the idea of legislative independence, Mr. Dundas thus declaimed: ‘ I condemn the operations of personal vanity, which, in this instance at least, run riot against the principles of common sense. I wish that gentlemen would direct their pride and honor to acts of laudable ambition; I wish that they would evince greater patriotism, by a due attention to the interests of both countries. If considerations of personal vanity and self-independence are to be allowed to operate on this subject, let gentlemen recollect, that, if their genius be ever so acute, their talents ever so transcendent, their eloquence ever so splendid, all these wonderful powers are confined to one little island. All their genius is limited to their own internal regulations, and reduced to their own small territory. Independence and liberty are fine sounding words; but can it be seriously maintained, that for the preservation of these it is necessary to have a separate and local legislature? The seat of the parliament does not constitute its value, but its adaptation to preserve the general interests of the community. This is the only true and valuable object of independence. I address myself therefore to the true pride of Ireland, which ought not to be biassed by false principles

ples of honor. A mind thus actuated is governed by a childish, not a manly ambition. Let, however, the Irish parliament accept a participation of all the rights of the parliament of Great-Britain; and the members would find, that their eloquence would not be confined to England, or to any other country, but that their voices would extend to every corner of the world. They would be heard, not only in Europe, but in Asia, Africa, and America. The parliament of Ireland would then become members of the British parliament, which had enabled this proud country to exalt its head amidst the wreck of surrounding nations, had given it energy and vigor to resist the pernicious doctrines of the French republic, and held us up as a monument of admiration and envy to the remotest corners of the world. They would then be the advocates not only of Ireland and Great-Britain, but advocates for the rights and liberties of the human race *.

To prove, by analogy, the benefits of an incorporation of the realms, the secretary referred to the state of Scotland in various particulars before and since the union. In 1692, he said, the shipping of North-Britain did not exceed the burthen of 8,618 tons, or the value of 25,854*l.*: in 1792, it amounted to 162,274 tons, and reached the value of 1,298,192*l.* In 1706, the customs were 34,000*l.*; in 1798, they were 284,577*l.*:—the excise, at the former period, did not rise beyond 33,500*l.*; in the latter year, the duties under that head were 851,775*l.* In 1700, a million of yards of Scottish linen were prepared for sale; in 1796, the number was augmented to 23,102,404 yards. The

* These expressions will remind some readers of the denomination by which Anacharsis Klostz was distinguished, *l'orateur du genre humain*—‘the orator of the human race.’

population of Scotland, also, had risen considerably; for many towns had doubled their inhabitants, and some had even a quintuple increase.

Mr. Dundas then amused himself and the house by a refutation of the pretended prophecies delivered in the speech of lord Belhaven against the Scottish union; and he concluded this part of his harangue by the adduction of a passage from a letter of queen Anne to the northern parliament, predicting the various blessings, with respect to religion, liberty, and property, which would result from the scheme of incorporation. Her majesty, he said, was a true prophetess; for 'not one syllable of her predictions had failed.'

As some speakers who had allowed the great increase of the prosperity of North-Britain since the union, had been inclined to refer it to different causes rather than to that event, he affirmed that there were many circumstances, founded on the 'local situation of Scotland, her internal policy, and her relation to other nations,' which would have debarred that kingdom, in a separate state, from participating in the rising prosperity of other countries. But, instead of particularising these circumstances from his own ideas or observations, he quoted a considerable part of the speech of Mr. Seton, who, 'at a time when he had no resources from which he could draw his conclusions, but those of his own enlightened understanding, and the view that he could take of the existing state of other nations,' had reasoned very judiciously in recommendation of an union. He added to his extracts the statement of a fact, which, in his conception, proved that the rapid progress of prosperity in Scotland arose from the union. That prosperity, he said, made 'its first appearance and its most early progress' in the western division of the

country, because the ports in that quarter were 'best situated to take the benefit of the colonial trade, then opened to the enterprise of Scotland.'

It had been said, that the proposed advantages might be given to the Irish without an union; but this argument might be refuted by observing, that Ireland, without a consolidation of the strength of both countries, would not be able to reap the full benefit of the offered concessions, and that a communication of capital and other advantages could not be expected from Great-Britain, unless there should be a general parliament possessing a control over the resources of the empire, and the power of applying them to imperial purposes.

The consideration of the ground on which the commercial offers of the year 1785 were rejected by the Irish—namely, because the fourth proposition seemed to encroach upon their independence—would, he thought, bring the question between the countries to a fair issue. 'Is Ireland to be considered as being in a better situation with her present separate legislature, and without these manifold commercial advantages; or with her legislature incorporated with that of Great-Britain, with the full enjoyment of all those benefits, and the various other advantages in a view of power, consequence, and respectability, which must result to Ireland, when thoroughly united with Great-Britain? This is the true question to be considered by the Irish; for my part, I have not a doubt upon the point: the latter situation would be decidedly to the advantage of Ireland.'

That the opposition which the present measure had encountered in the Irish parliament ought to influence the ministry to a dereliction of it, he could by no means

means admit. Two estates of the Irish parliament, the king and the peers, had 'pointedly expressed their desire that the subject should be entertained and considered;' while 'only a very narrow majority' in the house of commons had embraced the contrary opinion. It could not therefore be said, that the affair was so far decided as to render it unnecessary or improper to submit it again to the notice of the Hibernian nation. 'Sound reason and good sense (he said) will ultimately prevail; and I cannot help auguring well to the final success of the measure, as essential to the happiness of Ireland, when I contemplate the clamor and violence by which the consideration of it has been resisted. These are not the weapons by which truth and solid reasoning maintain their empire over the hearts and understandings of men. Cool consideration and sober reasoning are the arms by which the cause of truth is supported; and I have not a doubt that these weapons, properly used, will ultimately succeed against clamor and prejudice.' Thus the system of excise, once highly unpopular, was at length allowed, on deliberate reflection, to be the 'least expensive and most effectual mode by which a great revenue could be collected in any country;' and the union with Scotland, so odious at first to the natives of that part of Great-Britain, became in the sequel a popular measure.

Having offered other suggestions in support of the new union, Mr. Dundas repeated his wish, that the Irish would dispassionately re-consider the proposal; and he was confident that they would find it the best remedy for the disorders of their country, their strongest bulwark and their greatest blessing. The settlement of the year 1782 had been acknowledged by its authors to be imperfect, and to require extension and

improvement ; and he was convinced that nothing but an incorporation of the legislatures could supply the deficiency. With a hint of the probability of future indulgence to the catholics of both countries, and a sketch of the bitter effects of French fraternity, which, he hoped, no Irishman would prefer to British liberty, he concluded a very irregular and desultory, though not wholly unimpressive, harangue.

Mr. SHERIDAN replied to some of the arguments of Mr. Dundas with a mixture of reasoning and raillery, and still urged the impolicy of persisting in a measure to which the Irish could not give a free assent. He also took occasion to combat Mr. Pitt's reflexions on the supposed existence of a sovereignty in abeyance on the part of the people, observing that this principle was the foundation and security of all free governments, and formed the essential basis of the British constitution. He allowed that a perilous responsibility, both in law and conscience, would attend those who should make an appeal to this principle ; but affirmed that the right did not the less exist because it was not to be operative on ordinary occasions.

The *Secretary at War* (Mr. WINDHAM) was prompted, by some of the observations which he had heard, to deliver his sentiments in this stage of the business. It had been insinuated, he said, that the union was a measure calculated for the exclusive advantage of Great-Britain at the expence of Ireland ; but something nearly the reverse of that proposition seemed to him to be the case. It was his opinion, at the commencement of the present war, that Britain could get nothing by the changes which were agitating the world ; and what he thought then he thought now. This country had so much to lose, and so little to gain, by an union with Ireland, while,

while, on the contrary, Ireland had so much to gain, and so little to lose, that the advantages might, in truth, be said to be all on one side ; but the feeling of a strong necessity would induce him to forego all his abhorrence and dread of innovation, and give his assent to the proposal. The disorders of that kingdom might be ascribed to various causes ; but they chiefly grew out of the nature of its constitution. This, like a body distorted and mis-shapen, gave rise to various diseases, some chronical, and some acute, which, as they were inherent in its frame, no medicine could eradicate. The deformity of this constitution was its coercive form ; it was like a garrison in the midst of a conquered town : it was a mere provisional government, deriving its existence, form, and power, from another state. Much of the misery of Ireland also arose from the barbarous ignorance of its people, who had been rendered ferocious by the animosities which existed among them. This ferocity had given occasion to new restraints on the part of the government, which redoubled the fury of the people ; so that government stood in the same relation to them as the man did to the wolf which he had by the ears, and which he could neither hold nor let go. The constitution, therefore, and the gross ignorance which it encouraged, were the remote causes of the distractions of Ireland ; but the proximate cause was undoubtedly the inoculation of French principles——

“ That leperous distilment
 “ Which holds such enmity to th’ blood of man,”

that it can never enter without producing death. Unfortunately the contamination had reached Ireland, and to its baneful influence might be attributed the late horrible disorders of that kingdom. An ancient philosopher

sopher had said, that the people were like a sea, which the breath of demagogues could put into commotion. If this were true, what a sea was the Irish nation for the demagogues of France to agitate !

The ministry, said Mr. Windham, had been accused of corrupting the parliament of Ireland. Corruption was not a solitary vice ; it required two parties to constitute the crime—the corruptor and corrupted. Now, if it were true that the parliament of Ireland was of a nature prone to admit corruption, what would be the consequence of a total abstinence from it on the part of government ? Corruption disappointed might degenerate into faction, and its tendencies ungratified might be highly mischievous.

The only remedy which he could propose for the distressed condition of Ireland was an improvement of the state of the lower orders, by an infusion of British capital and British manners. To promote this effect, full security must be enjoyed by all who should settle in the country ; and an union seemed to promise such security beyond any other measure that could be suggested. The Irish, he trusted, would be eager to adopt this remedy, when their present phrensy should subside. He was glad to find that religion had mingled itself with the late rebellion ; for this proved that the Irish were not jacobins. Where-ever religion existed, there was hope, there was a chance of reclaiming ; but jacobinism was incurable. The present fury of the Irish would perhaps soon be allayed. The appeal would then be from Philip drunk to Philip sober, from a people mad with independence, regardless of reason or argument, to a community not indisposed for patient examination. Some members were inclined to wait for a season of perfect sobriety and coolness ;
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but, while the causes of irritation remained, this would be a postponement *ad Græcas calendas*. One gentleman had affirmed that the Irish had not a freedom of assent; but it appeared that they had freely dissented; and it partook, he thought, of the confusion of Hibernian logic to say, that a body which had given its *dissent* freely could not with equal freedom give its *assent*. It had been said, that the Irish were almost unanimously hostile to the measure; but the case seemed to be, that the opinions of the dispassionate were drowned in the general clamor. He denied that it would be disrespectful to the parliament of Ireland to proceed in the business. To state the grounds upon which the scheme was entertained in Great-Britain, and point out the beneficial tendency of the offer, argued a friendly politeness rather than disrespect. He therefore wished that the measure might be discussed in a committee.

Mr. TIERNEY was surprised that ministers should have proposed an union to this parliament without having been previously assured of the consent of the Irish legislature; but he was still more astonished and even alarmed at their present perseverance, after the strong disapprobation which had assailed the measure in Ireland. All who wished to preserve the peace and connexion of the two countries, had reason, he said, to deprecate the discussion of a scheme so obnoxious to the majority in one of the kingdoms. He added, that the language which had been used by the last speaker was not calculated to appease the irritation of the Irish: injurious reflexions and indecorous allusions would only tend to exasperate and inflame them.

With regard to the benefits of the plan, he was doubtful whether they were sufficient to counterbalance the
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the probable dangers, and compensate to the Irish the loss of independence. The commercial advantages now offered they might have obtained in 1785, at a cheaper rate, as we only professed to require, that the surplus of their hereditary revenue should be applied to the support of the navy by which they were defended. The catholics perhaps might profit by the measure; but their expectations had not a very firm basis. Industry might be more prevalent, wealth might increase, and good morals might become more general; but these points might be gained without an union.

He was among those who doubted the competency of the Hibernian parliament on this occasion. Would a delegated body be justified in violating the trust reposed in it by the people? Were not the specific instructions of constituents necessary to authorise such an important change, or ought not a new parliament to be expressly convoked for this momentous purpose?

He also considered the parliamentary part of the scheme as a dangerous innovation with respect to Britain. The greatest anti-reformer of the age (Mr. Windham) had formerly said, when a plan of reform was proposed by Mr. Flood, 'What! would you repair your house in a hurricane?' Yet, while Ireland was in a tempestuous state, this gentleman stood forward as an advocate for an union, without reflecting on the innovating nature of a plan which he ought to be the first to oppose. Might not the introduction of one hundred members from Ireland so far augment the influence of the minister, as to elevate him above all control?

He noticed other points connected with the subject, and animadverted on the observation of Mr. Dundas respecting the field of speculation and enterprise which the union would open to the Irish members; adding, that

that this minister might illustrate his recommendatory arguments by referring to his own success in the same field, and might exemplify the benefits of the union with Scotland by his own acquisitions of dignity and emolument. These allusions produced an altercation between the secretary and Mr. Tierney ; but it soon yielded to the regular business of the day.

Mr. GRANT *, having rallied the inconsistency of those members who, while they deprecated the agitation of the question, seemed willing to launch into a copious discussion of it, chiefly confined his arguments to three points. The first had reference to the assent of the Irish parliament, in the present circumstances of the country. The secretary at war (he thought) had answered the objection relative to that point ; but, as Mr. Sheridan had said in explanation, that assent might be enforced by military terrors, Mr. Grant denied that there was any ground for supposing that the deliberations of the Irish legislature were or would be influenced or governed by force. If the army should overawe the members, he allowed that a free assent could not be given ; but it did not appear that the presence of the troops in the country had any effect on the freedom of deliberation. The Irish did not seem to be under the least restraint in the delivery or propagation of their opinions ; and, if they did not complain of the exercise of domineering influence, it showed an officious zeal in others to adduce such a charge.—The second topic was the competence of parliament. This body, he said, was morally incompetent to do any thing improper or unjust ; but it was legally competent to do any thing whatever. If it were not, where would the

* Now sir William Grant, master of the rolls.

competence

competence exist? Did it belong to the electors? Many might say that it did not, and that it would be necessary to have recourse to the people; but the impracticability of taking the suffrages of the whole community would preclude this resort.—The third point was, whether it was proper to discuss the measure after the late proceedings in Ireland. He contended that the refusal of taking the subject into consideration in the house of commons of that realm ought to operate as an additional reason for stating the terms, that the offer might not be finally rejected before the true nature of the scheme should be known to the public.

After some remarks from Mr. William Smith, tending to dissuade the assembly from a prosecution of the plan, the question of commitment was decided in the affirmative, the supporters of the order of the day being 149, and the opposers only 24. A committee of the whole house was immediately formed, and the resolutions were moved.

We shall not in this stage of the business give our opinion of the offered terms, but shall reserve for another part of the volume our review of the most prominent features of the scheme.

On the 11th day of the same month, the minister having proposed that the committee should resume its deliberations, Mr. SHERIDAN rose for the purpose of recommending a substitute for legislative union. He was of opinion, that the abolition of all disabilities which had been incurred in civil affairs by religious distinctions would tend more to the improvement of the connexion between Great-Britain and Ireland than the measure now brought forward. He had the authority of the premier himself for the expediency of emancipating the catholics of Ireland from the incapacities to which

which they were subjected. Such was the opinion of the leaders of the cabinet in the year 1795; and, though earl Fitzwilliam was not then desired or permitted to propose the emancipation, he was authorised to give it 'a handsome support' on the part of government. But a change of sentiment soon occurred; and the consequences of the change were deeply to be lamented. Some might think that Mr. Pitt merely intended to amuse and dupe the catholics; but this would be a much stronger imputation on his character than an acknowledgement of a change of opinion arising from an alteration of circumstances or from more deliberate reflexion.

Having censured the impolicy of neglecting that great object, and of recalling a vice-roy who was the avowed advocate of the catholics, Mr. Sheridan contended that his proposal would remedy much of the evil and misery which existed in Ireland, by extinguishing religious feuds, and promoting an union of interests; that no danger would attend the adoption of it, as all fears of the prevalence of popery were groundless; and that it would increase the strength of both countries, without injuring the constitution of either. He then moved, that it should be an instruction to the committee to consider 'how far it would be consistent with justice and policy, and conducive to the general interests, and especially to the consolidation of the strength of the British empire, were civil incapacities on account of religious distinctions to be done away throughout his majesty's dominions.'

Mr. PITT strongly objected to what he called a very extraordinary proposition. He was surprised that one who professed himself a warm friend to the independ-
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ence of the Irish parliament should propose what would be an obvious encroachment on that independence, an act of dictation and control. The motion itself, and the declarations of the mover, were, he said, inconsistent with each other. Was it probable, he asked, that, if our parliament should give its sanction to the proposal, that of Ireland would adopt it? In Great-Britain it might be perfectly safe to admit the catholics, a comparatively small sect, to an equality of rights; but, in a country where they formed the bulk of the nation, the dread of their ascendancy opposed the idea of such concession, unless the parliaments of the two realms should be united. If the measure should pass without legislative incorporation, it would increase jealousy and inflame animosity; and, instead of improving the connexion, it would weaken and impair it.

Mr. SHERIDAN disclaimed all thought of invading the independent rights of the Irish legislature, as his motion only tended to suggest an opinion which that parliament might adopt or reject, and to give the catholics a pledge of support preferable to a ministerial promise. He ridiculed the affected tenderness of the minister for a parliament which he wished to annihilate, and accused him of having, in conjunction with those who had supported him with a mercenary confidence, occasioned the distractions and calamities of Ireland by disappointing the reasonable expectations of the catholics.

Mr. PITT denied that the rebellious disturbances in Ireland originated in any degree from the refusal of granting emancipation to the catholics, or that earl Fitzwilliam was authorised to hold out any hopes or make any promises which were afterwards withdrawn or retracted.

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The motion was now rejected without a division; but a fresh debate arose, when Mr. Pitt moved that the speaker should leave the chair.

Lieutenant-general FITZPATRICK, who had acted as secretary to the viceroy of Ireland (the duke of Portland), asserted, from his own knowledge of the views of the cabinet in 1782, the constitutional finality of the compact, which was then adjusted, and completed in the following year; but we need not detail his history of that transaction. An incorporative union, from its tendency to a subversion of that settlement, deserved in his opinion the severest censure. Its abettors, while they decried French principles, were ready to imitate French examples. He knew of nothing, in the conduct of our republican neighbours, more violent in point of breach of faith than this measure would be towards Ireland. Even the conduct of the French towards the Swiss did not appear to him to be more reprehensible than this.—The particular terms of the union he would not discuss, as he condemned the general principle. Indeed, the better the conditions seemed to be, the more he might, as an Irishman, be induced to dread them; he might say, *timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. What security would the Irish have for the continuance of the promised advantages? How would a minority be able to enforce the execution of the terms? In every case of rivalry British superiority would overwhelm the interests of Ireland.

The honorable Mr. DUDLEY RYDER, after replying with spirit to the censure which Mr. Sheridan had thrown out (and in which he persisted) against the mercenary supporters of the minister, defended the union against the attacks of Mr. Fitzpatrick. Far from involving the least breach of faith, it was, he

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said, a fair and justifiable proposal, submitted by one parliament to another, depending on full freedom of respective assent or rejection. Instead of violating or subverting the independence conceded in 1782, it was in itself a strong recognition of that claim; and Ireland, after an union, would be as independent as Great-Britain. The settlement of that year was not intended, even by its authors, to be final, or preclusive of such arrangements as two states, negotiating on equal terms, might be inclined to adopt. To compare a treaty of this honorable kind with the iniquitous proceedings of the French in Switzerland was palpably absurd and extremely unjust. The apprehensions of a subsequent inattention to the interests of Ireland were also ill founded, as all rivalry would be lost in community of interest and mutuality of benefit.

Mr. FITZPATRICK softened his reflexions on the union by declaring that he did not mean to represent it as equally atrocious with the acts of the French in Switzerland, though there was some similitude, he thought, between the motives of France and Great-Britain, -as the former power might be supposed to have taken possession of the Swiss territories in the hope of securing itself against an attack in a part easily vulnerable, and the latter seemed desirous of adding Ireland to her dominion with the same view.

Mr. PITT, offended at the comparison which had been drawn, repelled it with warmth. He could not have supposed, that, even in the wildest flights of oratorical extravagance, any speaker would compare the free discussion of constitutional and commercial interests between independent legislatures with the violent and unprincipled conduct of France towards Switzerland. Nor could he admit as satisfactory the subsequent qualification

lification of the comparison ; for the union was calculated for the benefit and security of both countries, whereas the case of Switzerland was the subjection of the inhabitants to the most abject and deplorable slavery by their pretended protectors.—The imputation of inconsistency he obviated by distinguishing between a final recognition of the independence of Ireland and a final settlement between that kingdom and Britain upon every concern that might arise. That recognition, he affirmed, did not render Ireland more incapable of treating of the question of union, or of any other political object, than a country whose independence was of very ancient date. The adjustment rather led to than precluded future arrangements. But, as our readers will recollect that he had before discussed this subject, they will excuse us from repeating what he at this time said.

Mr. TIERNEY, to prove that the settlement in question was understood to be final, referred to an address (voted on the 28th of May, 1782), in which the Irish house of commons assured his majesty, that ‘ no constitutional questions between the two nations would any longer exist, which could interrupt their harmony.’

Mr. DUNDAS allowed that the independence of the Irish parliament had been completely acknowledged in 1782, but denied that this agreement could preclude its free assent to any measure whatever, and affirmed that it was the intention of government at that time to propose new arrangements.

After several intervening speeches which do not require our notice, Mr. Sheridan re-urged some of his former arguments ; and the solicitor-general (sir John Mitford), speaking of the adjustment, observed, that,

from the nature of the transaction, it could not be complete or final, and that the expectations of ulterior arrangement were general at the time.

The honorable Mr. PERCIVAL * concurred with the ministerial speakers on the subject of the adjustment ; represented the union as a beneficial scheme ; and exhorted the house to adopt the resolutions, that its sentiments might be recorded and fully known.

Mr. SYLVESTER DOUGLAS † discussed the question of the competency of the parliament of Ireland to an adoption of the plan of union. Such an assent, he said, would not (as some had affirmed) be a surrender of the rights or the authority of that body ; but there would merely be a reciprocal communication and intermixture of legislative power. From his ideas of the constitution of parliament, he had no doubt of its full competency ; and this was the opinion of the chiefs of the four great tribunals in Ireland. Very few even of the anti-unionists, he said, ventured to dispute this point.

Dr. LAURENCE spoke at considerable length (we might say with a prolixity which in this stage of the business was particularly unnecessary), on many points connected in different degrees with the subject. He began with representing a continued amity between Great-Britain and Ireland as essential to the safety and prosperity of the empire. If the two countries, he said, should not be closely connected, their rivalry would not suffer them to remain at peace ; and a war between them, by throwing Ireland into the arms of our greatest enemy, would expose Britain to the utmost danger.—He proceeded to treat of the nature of the

* Now solicitor-general.

† Now a peer of Ireland by the title of lord Glenbervie.

existing

existing connexion. This, he said, was not merely an union of the crowns, but also of the entire executive governments; and the British control over Ireland was so strong, that, for the augmentation of it, the extinction of the legislature of the sister kingdom did not seem to be requisite. The danger of occasional disagreement between the parliaments had, indeed, been emphatically pressed; yet he was not disposed to dread a peril so distant or so visionary. From the case of the regency false conclusions had been drawn. The Irish had acted wisely in conferring on the regent a greater share of power and influence than appeared to be necessary in Britain; and no part of their conduct led to the risque of a separation of the realms.—The parliament of Ireland, it was said, had been influenced by faction. This was a vague charge, and would not stand the test of candid examination. In refuting this aspersion, Dr. Laurence took an opportunity of vindicating Mr. Grattan from the suspicion of seditious machinations or treasonable delinquency.

He afterwards examined the adjustment of which so much had been said. He did not mean to argue, that it could debar the Irish from accepting the offer of an union; but he affirmed, that, whatever additional arrangements might have been intended by its framers, no scheme inconsistent with the independence then recognised was entertained by those statesmen.

He then contended for the probability of a gradual removal of the chief evils of Ireland, without the risque of an obtruded union. From the year 1782 to the late rebellion, arts and civilisation had made a great progress in that country; and, though the disastrous commotions had checked improvement in those respects, the return of tranquillity re-invigorated the hopes of

all who looked forward to the increase of national prosperity.

In discussing the question of catholic emancipation, he leaned to the side of indulgence and concession. He lamented the recall of earl Fitzwilliam at a time when there was a prospect of obtaining the acquiescence of the Irish parliament in the claims of the catholics ; and he still thought that their wishes might be gratified by the existing legislature without danger to the protestant interest.

We may sum up the remainder of this gentleman's speech by intimating, that, as the very proposal had thrown Ireland into a state of violent fermentation, he pronounced it rash and impolitic to record in the journals of our parliament any determination whatever on the subject ; that, on one account above all others, he deprecated a continuance of discussion, as it was promotive of inquiries into the competence of parliaments under the constitution of these realms, and into the abstract rights of the people under the fundamental laws of civil society—inquiries which might prove very dangerous in these unsettled times ; that, adverting to our revolution, he developed his own political creed, which was that of a moderate whig ; that he condemned the mode of proceeding in the present business as less regular and judicious than that which had been pursued in the case of the Scottish union ; and, drawing a contrast between the circumstances of the respective countries at that conjuncture and at this period, represented an union, in the former case, as necessary for preventing a war or a total separation, while he denied the existence of such necessity in the case of Ireland.

The division which followed this debate exhibited a
great

great difference of number; for only 19 appeared against the progress of the union, while 131 voted for it.

Weary of debate, the house merely formed a committee, and then adjourned. The next day, before the speaker left the chair, Mr. Sheridan, referring to some observations which had occurred in former discussions, delivered his decided opinions, importing that, besides the multiplied perils which would attend the prosecution of the scheme of union at the present time, it would never be a desirable measure, as it would not augment the prosperity of either country, and might endanger the liberties of both; and that, whatever might be the competency of the British parliament to accept the surrender of the independence of another legislature, that of Ireland had no right, consistently with its duty to the people whom it represented, to resign its separate existence.

When Mr. Douglas had taken the chair, Mr. BANKES signified his objections to an union. He represented Ireland as being in such a disordered state, that it was not only inexpedient but unsafe to coalesce with her. An union, he said, would not remedy her evils; but her own parliament might gradually redress her grievances. That legislature ought to retrace some of its steps, and, drawing a line between the disaffected and the loyal catholics, re-enact restrictive laws against the former, while the latter should be admitted to all the privileges now enjoyed by the protestants. British intrigue and faction ought also to be studiously checked in Ireland, as they had been productive of much evil. The proposed incorporation, he thought, would not tend to tranquillise that country: it would perhaps increase the number of the enemies of the government, and not

add any real strength to the empire. The connexion, from the unity of the executive power, was sufficiently close to prevent a material discordancy of sentiment in great political questions; and commercial advantage would likewise contribute to bind Ireland to Great-Britain.

The *Speaker* of the house (Mr. ADDINGTON *) then addressed the committee. Far from agreeing with his friend, Mr. Bankes, either in his opinion of the insecurity of any union which might be at this time effected, or in his assertion of the adequacy of the Hibernian legislature to the redress of those grievances which required parliamentary interposition, he was convinced, from the situation of Ireland at this moment, not merely of the expediency, but of the urgent necessity of an union, and was firmly of opinion, that, though the parliament of that kingdom might of itself redress some grievances and remove some causes of irritation, there were radical and inherent evils for which nothing but an incorporation of the two legislatures could provide a remedy. The state of Ireland, he said, had at no period of its history been such as to afford satisfaction to any mind that could justly appreciate the blessings of a well-ordered, a flourishing, and a happy condition of civil society. The bounty of Providence had, indeed, been displayed in that country by a fertile soil, and by abundant means of internal improvement and prosperity. Its inhabitants were not less distinguished than those of Great-Britain, in corresponding stations of life, for eloquence, for literary and scientific attainments, and for those talents and exertions which had established the naval and military

* Now first commissioner of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer.

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renown of the British empire. Their 'form of government was the same as our own; but it wanted its true characteristics; it did not, like ours, bestow and receive general confidence and protection; for it was not connected by ties which, he trusted, were here indissoluble, with the obvious interests, the feelings and the sentiments of the great body of the people.'

He then traced the origin and progress of that animosity which had led to insurrection and rebellion; but, as there was nothing new in this part of his speech, or in his sketch of the concessions of Great-Britain to Ireland in the reign of his present majesty, we shall pass onward to his succeeding observations. The settlement of the year 1782 having loosened the ancient ties of connexion between the kingdoms, without substituting any others in their place, it was necessary, he said, to pursue a different plan. Three schemes had been proposed for the benefit of Ireland, and for the improvement and perpetuation of her connexion with this country. These related to the emancipation of the catholics, to the re-enactment, either partial or total, of the laws against popery, and to the incorporation of the parliaments of the two realms. The first scheme, according to the general opinions and views of its advocates, included a parliamentary reform; and, as it tended to take the influence from property, and give it to numbers, it threatened great injury, if not ruin, to the protestant interest. He was not one of those who were unwilling to remove the real grounds of complaint against the protestant ascendancy; but he was strongly disinclined to a scheme which might expose that establishment to immediate and perhaps inevitable danger. Indeed, the only measure which promised to secure the protestants, and at the same time to favor the catholics

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in a reasonable degree, was that of a legislative union. —With regard to the re-enactment of the restrictive code, he allowed that the act of 1793, which had gratified the catholics by a removal of particular disabilities, tended to endanger the interests of their adversaries; but he was of opinion, that a renewal of such restrictions, by inflaming the minds of the majority of the Irish, would aggravate the evils under which the nation groaned.—The third scheme was infinitely preferable to either of these, and was indeed the only plan which promised to be efficacious. His opinion on this subject was ‘sanctioned by great and respectable authorities,’—by sir Matthew Decker, sir William Petty, sir Josiah Child—by Molyneux, the friend of Locke—and by many distinguished men of the present time. With the sentiments of these friends of an union he would contrast those which were professed by Dr. Mac-Nevin and the united Irishmen, whose decided repugnance to a measure that tended to the frustration of their traitorous projects served to demonstrate its necessity. That it was ‘calculated to avert much probable evil from both countries, and to produce positive and substantial advantages to both,’ he could affirm without hesitation.

A very material consideration in favor of an union was, that it would preclude the inconvenience and danger which might be apprehended from the discordant determinations of separate and independent legislatures. Instancing the commercial propositions and the regency, the Speaker observed that, in the former case, ‘the sensitive jealousy of the parliament of Ireland deprived that country of the obvious and undisputed advantages which would arise from a free access to the home market of Great-Britain;’ and that, in the latter,

ter, ' the diversity of opinion, which occurred in the two parliaments, led not only to a difference as to the extent of the power and authority, but as to the identity of the person by whom, during the illness of his majesty, the functions of executive government were to be exercised.' The same person was, indeed, nominated by both, but by one as a matter of choice, by the other in virtue of a supposed right; in one kingdom he was to have more limited powers, in the other the same powers and prerogatives as the monarch himself. It was therefore obvious, that the discordant principles which operated at that juncture, and which occasioned the delegation of different degrees of authority, might also have led to the appointment of different individuals, at the hazard of the tranquillity and safety of the empire, and in direct violation of the spirit of that statute which declared that the kingdom of Ireland was inseparably annexed to, and dependent upon, the crown of Great-Britain. It was imagined by some, that, as both countries had the same executive magistrate, great embarrassments or dangers could not arise from a difference of legislative opinion; but it ought to be considered, that the people had privileges, of which the power of the purse was the most important; that this privilege ought not to be borne down by prerogative; that it might, at a period of public emergency, be differently exercised in both countries; and that the co-operation of the two leading branches of the empire could never be ensured, even on occasions in which its security and independence were deeply and essentially involved. On the contrary, if the present measure should be carried into effect, it would preclude the discordance to which he alluded, and might lead to a coincidence

incidence of views and sentiments in the great body of the people of both kingdoms.

No consideration, he added, so forcibly impelled him to wish for an union, as his conviction of the beneficial consequences which would result from it to the internal situation of Ireland. He had no doubt of its leading to the removal of a principal ground of animosity, by precluding that species of contest which had hitherto subsisted for political authority and power; and, among the lower orders of society, he was confident that its salutary effects would be found in that change of manners, the result of habitual industry, which would be produced by the transfer of capital from Great-Britain to Ireland. Such an application of wealth would operate on every class of the community; and, notwithstanding what had been said of the probable aggravation of the evil arising from the non-residence of the opulent proprietors of land in that country, every thing which had a tendency to give security to property and improvement to manners would prove the fallacy of such a supposition. Even 'those wastes and fastnesses which afforded retreat to the murderer, the assassin, and the rebel, would be the scenes of cheerful labor and protected industry, of mutual confidence and social intercourse, under the superintendence and guardianship of well-administered and beneficent laws.'

It had been said, that the measure would not produce any immediate advantage to the catholics of Ireland; but to this assertion Mr. Addington could not accede. The elective franchise, bestowed on those sectaries in 1793, could hardly be considered as a boon to them, as the right, with the limitation annexed to it,

it, could not in general be exercised without some degree of violence to their opinions and their feelings, and could only be used for the purpose of contributing to form a house of commons, the whole body of which they conceived to be adverse to their interests. But the same franchise, when employed in contributing to form the representation in an united parliament, would be accompanied with the satisfactory reflexion, that 'the individual in whose behalf it was exercised would be mixed with those, a majority of whom were uninfluenced by the prejudices which have been imputed to the parliament, and the great body of the protestants of Ireland.'

He did not deem it necessary to offer an opinion respecting the expediency of extending to the catholics of Great-Britain and Ireland, in the event of an union, a more ample participation of the rights and privileges of protestant subjects; but he quoted a passage from one of the speeches of Dr. Duigenan, importing, that an union, 'even if it should be at all detrimental, would be much less prejudicial to the Romanists of Ireland than to any other class of his majesty's subjects in that kingdom, as the preponderance of the protestant body of the whole empire would be sufficiently great to extinguish all jealousy and rivalry between protestants and catholics for ever, and render it unnecessary to curb the latter by any exclusive law.

The union with Scotland having been ably discussed for the purpose of comparison, he forbore to enter into particulars on that head, merely saying, that, though the animosity between the English and Scots, at the time which immediately preceded the union, had led them to the verge of hostilities, the 'grounds of distrust and complaint were thereby entirely done away, and that

that there were circumstances tending to facilitate an intimate connexion between this country and Ireland, and to incorporate the two nations, which did not belong to the relative predicament of England and Scotland. In illustration of the latter remark, he observed, that here, and in Ireland, the same code of civil and criminal law prevailed; the same forms for the administration of justice and for the purposes of legislation, the same succession to the crown, and the same established religion, existed in both countries.

Two objections to the measure, he said, required more notice than the rest: one related to the competency of the Hibernian parliament for its adoption; the other to the adjustment of the year 1782. In examining the former question, it appeared to him, that the new doctrines of the times were on one side, and the sound principles, the theory and the practice of the British constitution, on the other. The highest legal authorities affirmed the extent and the supremacy of the power of parliament. That its functions ought on all occasions to be exercised with the utmost circumspection, would be readily and universally allowed; but it must at the same time be admitted, that parliament had the power and the right to new-model the constitution, to alter the succession to the crown, and change the established religion of these kingdoms, when the public security and welfare seemed to require such innovations. • Where then (he asked), if not in parliament, can the means of carrying into effect such an arrangement as that which is now in contemplation, however necessary, and however approved, be supposed to reside? Not in the constituent body;—for it cannot justly be said that the electors delegated a trust to their representatives with a reservation in particular cases;—not in the people at large;

large ; for such a supposition would imply the dissolution of the government. It is indeed an established truth, that, while the constitution exists, the only legitimate sanction of public opinion, and its only efficient authority, must be derived from the proceedings of parliament.

In treating of the second topic, he said, that the attempts to preclude the discussion of the present subject, by the denomination of a final adjustment, which had been bestowed on the proceedings of the year 1782, struck him with more astonishment than even those which he had read and heard against the sufficiency of parliament. If any importance were to be attached to those words, he should have expected to find them solemnly recorded in acts of the respective legislatures; as the basis of the new relation which then took place between the two countries: but what was the fact? They were introduced in a message from the king, and noticed in the addresses of the British parliament, and of the house of lords in Ireland; but, in the address of the house of commons of that country, they were not to be found; and, as it had been the practice (and a judicious one it was, in case of a general concurrence of opinion), that the address should accord with the speech or the message from his majesty, the omission was remarkable.

In truth, all that had been said on this part of the subject appeared to him to be a dispute about words; for he was ready to acknowledge, that the British parliament would justly incur the imputation of a gross breach of faith, if it should aim, either directly or indirectly, at the resumption of the power and supremacy which were then solemnly renounced; and that the adjustment, as far as the independency of the Irish parliament

liament was concerned, was really and absolutely final and conclusive ; but, if the argument, which was meant to be founded on these words, could be expected to avail, it must not only pass over the measure which took place in the subsequent year, and the resolution of the 17th of May, 1782, which immediately succeeded the permission of introducing a bill to repeal the act of the sixth year of George I. but it must contend that the true import of the words was so binding and peremptory, as to bar the possibility of adopting any ulterior arrangement of the nature of that to which they might be supposed to apply, however demanded by the obvious interests and the wishes of the inhabitants of both countries. Such a proposition could not be maintained ; and, if not, the argument with which it was necessarily connected must fall to the ground.

On the surrender of the rights of the parliament of Ireland, and the sacrifice of its independence, which had been imputed to the present measure, he was not disposed to dwell ; the futility of the arguments on which those objections were founded, had been, in his opinion, fully demonstrated : he would only say, that, if an uniform coincidence should take place between the legislatures, the independence of one or the other would be liable to be called in question ; and that, without such a coincidence, the interests of the empire, and eventually the connexion between the countries, might be endangered.

One objection, he allowed, had some force. He was thoroughly convinced that the house of commons, as at present constituted, was a true and faithful representative of the people of Great-Britain ; that in this assembly their opinions and their wishes (he did not mean the fluctuating and fleeting impressions of the day, but those

those which were the result of correct information and deliberate reflexion) had their due influence, and were fully and accurately expressed. He could not, therefore, contemplate a proposal for such an augmentation of its numbers, and the possible effects which might be produced by it, without a considerable degree of anxiety. But he was not inclined to oppose a conjectural and contingent evil to that which was positive and immediate; or, if he should, he must cautiously compare one with the other, and strike the balance. The pressing evils were uppermost in his mind; and every other remedy which had been suggested appeared to him to be fraught with consequences far more injurious than any of those which this circumstance was capable of producing.

Of danger to the commercial interests of this country he entertained no serious apprehension. It was not true that Britain would necessarily lose what Ireland would gain. He knew, besides, the liberality and the good sense of the merchants and manufacturers of this country. If Ireland should cease to be a separate kingdom, they would not wish to withhold from her inhabitants a fair and equal participation of the advantages which were enjoyed by themselves; and they were fully aware that whatever contributed to promote industry and to produce tranquillity in Ireland, had a tendency to give additional security and stability to the trading interests of Great-Britain.

After a dispassionate consideration of the subject, he was of opinion, that greater advantages were now offered to Ireland than had ever been afforded by any single measure to any country; that the union would greatly augment the national resources, and place upon a rock which would be impregnable, as far as that

term could be applied to any human establishment, the strength and security of the British empire. His ideas and hopes even extended farther, as he was fully persuaded, that whatever tended to consolidate and maintain the power and the independence of these kingdoms was of signal importance to the best and most valuable interests of mankind.

The chairman then put the question upon the first and four following resolutions; and the committee agreed to each. The mention of the sixth * called up Mr. Wilberforce Bird, who considered it as requiring particular deliberation, from the effect which it might have on some important branches of manufacture carried on in this kingdom, and requested that it might not be precipitately sanctioned. Mr. Pitt thought it a matter of indifference to the general welfare, in what part of the empire a particular manufacture should be carried on, provided it were in a place where it was most likely to flourish; and he was happy in being able to say, that the trade and manufactures of this country were far from being in such an improsperous or precarious condition as to give cause of apprehending danger from the proposed concessions to Ireland.

To the remaining resolutions the committee now assented; and, on the 14th, a motion was made for receiving the report.

MR. HOBHOUSE then stated his reasons for opposing the measure. He first dwelt on the unfavorable reception which had attended the proposal in Ireland, where it was obnoxious to a great majority of the people. This consideration alone, he thought, ought to induce the minister to relinquish his scheme. It was hazard-

* See page 116.

ous to persist in it, as discontent and jealousy might so increase that the mal-contents might find an opportunity of exerting with effect their traitorous efforts for the total separation of the two countries. The competency of the Irish parliament to its adoption he was strongly disposed to doubt; and, to support his opinion, he referred to the authority of Messieurs Lee and Plunket*, men of eminence in the profession of the law, and members of the Hibernian legislature.—He then endeavoured to answer some of the arguments for an union, by alleging that a resident legislature would be better qualified than a remote parliament to remove the internal evils of Ireland; that it would be more likely to detect seditious intrigues; that, as the country had thriven for many years past, it would be inexpedient, on pretence of improvement, to make an attempt which might check the progress of its prosperity; and that the hopes of augmenting the wealth of Ireland by a transfer of British capital might be frustrated by that insecurity which would accompany the continuance of religious feuds.—He disapproved the scheme on another ground. The Irish members of the imperial parliament, sensible of their inferiority in point of number and interest, would be inclined, for the good of their country, to court the favor of the minister, by joining his phalanx; and this accession would tend to destroy the fair balance of the English constitution.

Lord GRANVILLE LEVESON GOWER declared himself a cordial friend to an union, which he considered as necessary for the safety and welfare of both countries.

Mr. ROBERT PEEL, who, in the year 1785, had

* See our report of the speeches of these gentlemen, chap. i.

appeared at the bar as a petitioner against the commercial propositions, declared that the support which he now gave to the scheme of incorporation arose from a change of circumstances rather than of sentiments, as the former plan, in offering extraordinary advantages to an inferior state, which had in some measure a diversity of interest, was much less expedient than one which would promote a community of interest by a completeness of union.

It might have been expected, from Mr. Peel's concern in the mercantile profession, that he would have copiously discussed the sixth resolution; but, though he thought it his duty to draw the attention of the house to that article, he contented himself with saying, 'It must be the intention of every one to place both countries on an equal footing; and, though nothing can be apprehended unfavorable to this country during the present low circumstances of Ireland, it [*the commercial article*] may have an operation, at a future time, highly prejudicial to our domestic industry. Each country is to provide for its own public debt; and, that of Great-Britain being infinitely larger than the debt of Ireland, heavy taxes are necessarily imposed on almost every article of consumption; which has so strong a tendency to enhance the price of labor, that goods manufactured under such a pressure cannot be offered on equally low terms with the produce of labor in places where similar burthens do not exist. Unless this objection be removed, the measure cannot be expected to have the concurrence of Great-Britain. I feel it the more necessary to urge this point, from having perceived in the Irish government a want of that liberality which characterises our own. The commercial intercourse now subsisting betwixt the countries

tries has lost every feature of reciprocity, British manufactures being heavily taxed on their admission into Ireland, whilst the goods of that kingdom meet with every encouragement here. Whatever may be the conduct of Ireland respecting the propositions of an union, I trust that the firmness of administration will be such, as to refuse all concession to menace and intrigue, and that the aid which it may be deemed necessary to extend in future to that nation will be received as the genuine offspring of affection. I always will oppose the giving of much for nothing, when demanded as a matter of right.

He took a superficial notice of other parts of the plan; and, while he affirmed that both kingdoms would derive from it additional strength and security, he attributed the greater share of benefit to Ireland. He stated the case of two commercial houses; one being, 'of the first respectability,' having 'an immense capital,' and extending its concerns to every part of the globe; the other 'in a comparatively low situation, with little property, limited credit, and confined connexions.' A proposal being made by the former to take the latter into partnership on equal terms, it might be supposed that the offer would be eagerly accepted; and, each party losing its distinct firm, the two houses would then become one.

Lord TEMPLE regarded an union as pregnant with various advantages, one of which gave him particular gratification: this was, its anti-jacobin tendency. He declaimed with strong invective against those who, under the mask of a parliamentary reform, wished to effect a revolution, and who were enemies to every establishment of civil society. The pernicious views

of such men, he thought, would be frustrated by this judicious measure; and the imperial parliament would rest on a firm basis, defying the blind zeal of innovation.—Another advantage would appear in the progress of civilisation among the Irish. The improvement of the arts might also be expected from a more intimate connexion with this country; and those sources of prosperity which Ireland was known to contain would be rendered highly productive by British encouragement. She would exchange her nominal independence, under which she had suffered many misfortunes, for substantial benefits and permanent security.

Mr. JONES, in answer to a remark of lord Temple, who had severely animadverted on the comparisons which had been drawn between the conduct of Great-Britain and that of France, affirmed that the measure might justly be compared with French fraternisation, if its promoters should attempt to ‘cram it down the throats of the Irish.’ He particularly warned the minister of the danger of introducing 100 Irish members into the British house of commons, to add to his ‘muzzled majority.’ The day of their appearance might be rued as fatal to the independence and happiness of both countries; and Britain, at least, might hereafter say of it,

*Ille dies primus lethi primusque malorum
Causa fuit.*

Mr. WILBERFORCE BIRD was of opinion, that Britain would be greatly injured in her trade and manufactures by the plan of union; and he also thought that it would not be very beneficial to Ireland if it should be forced upon that country, as it would then,

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in all probability, inflame and prolong animosities and divisions.

Lord MORPETH bestowed high praise on the measure, both in point of policy and of benevolence; and, considering it as the only scheme which could correct the vices and supply the defects of the Irish government, he was ready to give it his most strenuous support.

Sir JOHN MITFORD was displeased at the agitation of the question relative to the competency of parliament to surrender the rights supposed to be intrusted to it by the people. To dispute that competency was, he said, to maintain the sovereignty of the people, as the only source of government—a doctrine which would lead to nothing but anarchy and confusion. Would these disputants pretend that parliament cannot alter its own constitution, inquire into the right of voting, or regulate the qualifications of its members? This would be a revival of the detestable and detested doctrine of Thomas Paine and his abettors, who assert that parliament cannot reform itself, or correct its abuses, without having recourse to the advice and authority of a convention of the people. He did not suspect the member who had dwelt on this topic (Mr. Hobhouse) of entertaining such democratic opinions, but was willing to give him credit for sentiments more strictly constitutional. The full competency of parliament for the enactment of an union could not justly be denied; and he was also of opinion that no one who understood the true nature of government could doubt the policy or the propriety of the measure, calculated as it was for the benefit of both countries. The present government of the British empire was, in one point of view, a

solecism in politics. Two independent parliaments formed the organ by which the sovereign will of the state was expressed. Such an establishment resembled a monster with two bodies and one head, the power of the head being checked and limited by that of each body. The best political writers had no idea of a monster of this kind in treating of compounded governments. They stated the necessity of a sovereign power to direct imperial concerns, as, without the regulating principle of such a power, the operations of government could not be properly conducted, nor could any rational liberty exist. To supply this deficiency in the British dominions, a legislative union was desirable.

He then exhibited a sketch of the history of Ireland from the time of Henry II. and traced the progress of its civil and religious dissensions. As long as the physical force of the country should be at variance with its political force, and the great majority of the people should be subject to the sway of the professors of a different religion, Ireland, he thought, could not be governed with dispassionate wisdom, and could not enjoy such comfort or tranquillity as she would derive from the superintending care of an imperial parliament. The vices of the government would then be remedied, and the evils of the country in a great measure removed.

Colonel WOOD agreed with the speaker of the house in thinking that the disorders of Ireland might chiefly be attributed to some radical defect in the government of the country. That religious divisions had a considerable effect in aggravating those disorders, he firmly believed ; but from this remark he excepted the
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the late rebellion, in which catholics and protestants seemed to have buried their religious differences, conspiring against the connexion between the kingdoms on true jacobinical principles, for the overthrow of every religious as well as political institution, and for the plunder and division of property. The return of such a rebellion would most effectually be prevented by an union.—He did not coincide with those who were inclined to attribute the growing commercial prosperity of Ireland, since the year 1782, chiefly to the independence which she then acquired. That prosperity seemed rather to have arisen from the liberality of Britain. But, as the increase of wealth had not been accompanied with an adequate degree of tranquillity, civilisation, and comfort, it could not be said that the country had been wisely governed; and as the two parliaments, far from forming any bond of union, held out an assailable and vulnerable point to the enemies of both countries, the most prudent course, he thought, would be a speedy incorporation.

Mr. Bankes again expressed his disapprobation of an union; lord Belgrave spoke strongly in favor of it; and lieutenant-general Fitzpatrick, having renewed his declarations respecting the adjustment of 1782, was again answered by Mr. Pitt. On a division, the report was ordered to be brought up, the votes for its reception being 120 against 16.

When the first resolution had been sanctioned by the house, Mr. Tierney, alleging that this would sufficiently indicate the disposition of the assembly towards an union, moved that the consideration of the rest should be postponed for three months; but the majority exploded the motion, and adopted all the resolutions.

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The next procedure in this business was a communication of the votes of the commons to the lords, at a conference which took place on the 18th. The peers ordered the resolutions to be printed, and some illustrative papers to be produced ; but, not being inclined to a precipitate discussion of the subject, they suffered a month to elapse before they commenced the investigation.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Proceedings in Ireland—Public Meetings—Debate in the House of Commons on a ministerial Motion—Rejection of Lord Corry's Motion for an Address against the Union.

FROM the parliamentary scenes of Great-Britain let us turn our attention to Ireland, where the flame of patriotism, the spirit of party, the zeal of animosity, and the pride of ambition, operated in various modes, and pervaded the agitated realm. The viceroy and his associates neglected no means which seemed likely to promote the grand object of their wishes; and, by the force of ministerial influence, they added occasional proselytes to their phalanx. But they were strongly opposed by many even of their former friends, and found the majority of the nation (however desirous of a continuance of connexion) unfriendly to the scheme of union.

Frequent meetings, in the different counties of Ireland, were still encouraged by the anti-unionists; and strong resolutions were adopted with few dissentient voices. The military commanders sometimes interfered, on pretence of preventing the intrusion of the lower classes; but, though reports were circulated of their arbitrary and violent conduct, we do not find that the freeholders, burgesses, or freemen, were precluded by the army, in any instance, from the privilege of declaring their opinions in regular meetings.

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The corporation of Dublin, on the 25th of January, voted an address to the king, expressing a sincere wish for the preservation of British connexion, but requesting that he would not persist in recommending an union. The same body, at a subsequent meeting, voted thanks to the speaker of the house of commons, and the other members who had opposed the scheme, which, it was said, would not only be ruinous to Ireland, but threatened danger to the liberties of Great-Britain, in the addition to its parliament from a degraded country. Some of the commercial bodies of the capital publicly delivered sentiments of a similar nature and tendency ; and private companies vociferated invectives against the measure.

The freeholders of Fermanagh (on the 26th) added their voices to those of the other anti-unionists ; in King's county and the shire of Limerick strong declarations were voted in the same spirit of opposition ; and, in the counties of Monaghan and Clare, the electors thanked and applauded the members who had counteracted the scheme. In February, the like course was pursued by the freeholders of Cavan, Tyrone, and other shires ; but, in that of Galway, the archbishop of Tuam and other respectable individuals dissented from the general opinion ; and, in the chief town of that county, an address was voted by many of the inhabitants, maintaining the necessity of an incorporative union. The question being stated by these unionists with a conciseness not destitute of force, we will quote the passage in which it occurs. ' In the constitution of the empire, as it at present stands, we discover the seeds of party animosity and national jealousy. A protestant parliament and a catholic people ! hence religious dissension and civil discord. Two legislatures
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in the same empire ! hence local prejudices and commercial rivalry. By the settlement of 1782, the Irish parliament acquired the right of independent legislation—a right equally unsafe to exercise or not to exercise. To exercise it would have been to endanger the unanimity, and thereby to hazard the division of the empire ; while, by declining to exercise this right, the Irish parliament brought upon itself the imputation of abject submission to the British legislature. This imputation begot contempt—that contempt discontent—and that discontent rebellion. For this radical defect in the polity of the empire, we can see but one remedy ; and that remedy is an union.’

In the commercial city of Cork, a great disunion prevailed ; for, while many of the traders and other inhabitants were zealous for the ministerial scheme, a great number were hostile to it. Above 700 of the latter signed and published an address of thanks to the parliamentary anti-unionists in general, and to the earl of Charlemont and Mr. Foster in particular.

While the minds of the Irish were in a state of extraordinary agitation, the speech which Mr. Pitt delivered on the 23d of January was communicated to the nation in the ordinary prints ; and many of our readers will not find it difficult to believe, that some of the minister’s remarks increased the public ferment.

When it was moved by lord Castlereagh on the 28th of January, that the house of commons should adjourn to the 7th of February, sir JOHN PARNELL spoke, in warm terms of disapprobation, of Mr. Pitt’s speech, and expressed his hope, that the spirit of the Irish nation would disappoint the eager expectations of the British cabinet. The pledge for the prosecution of the measure ought, he said, to put the parliament and people of Ireland on their guard, and teach them to observe

observe with the most cautious vigilance every step which might be taken for the promotion of the scheme. An adjournment was therefore unadvisable.

Lord CASTLEREAGH said, that a newspaper report of a speech in the British parliament was not of sufficient weight to influence the house against an adjournment.

Mr. BARRINGTON affirmed, that the speech of the British minister, as given in the English vehicles of intelligence, was the 'most unwarrantable and overbearing denunciation of hostility against the liberty of Ireland that could be conceived;' and that it ought not to be overlooked under the flimsy pretence of its being a newspaper statement. To guard against the danger which impended over the country, the house ought to sit from day to day, and answer on the spur of the occasion any attempt upon the rights of the nation. A civil war, he hinted, might be the consequence of persisting in the rash measure.

Sir HENRY CAVENDISH favored the adjournment, and represented the inhabitants of the province of Munster as being almost unanimous in support of an union; but this assertion was contradicted on strong grounds by sir John Freke and other gentlemen.

Mr. PLUNKET, that the people might have more time for the deliberate intimation of their sentiments, was willing to agree to an adjournment; but he hoped that no unfair advantage would be taken of it by the ministers, who, he added, ought not to be suffered to continue in office, as their conduct was not that of patriots, or of upright governors of a nation.

Mr. GEORGE PONSONBY wished that all personalities against the ministry might be avoided, and that attacks should be solely directed against the odious measure which was in agitation.

Mr.

Mr. ROCHFORD and Mr. WOLFE, though they were desirous of supporting the general system of administration, were determined enemies to the scheme of union, and declared, that, if the cabinet should persist in it, they would oppose it with the utmost vigor in every stage of its progress.

Mr. MAXWELL conjured all those members who had any regard for the interest of their country to watch with unceasing attention the proceedings of the court, and not suffer any advantage to be taken by the artifices or the pertinacity of the abettors of an union.

Lord CASTLEREAGH promised that, if his majesty's counsellors should think it their duty again to propose this measure, full notice should be given of such intention.

This declaration did not satisfy the anti-unionists, who resolved to exert their utmost efforts for procuring such a parliamentary determination, such a pledge for the maintenance of the existing constitution, as might oblige the cabinet finally to relinquish the scheme. With this view, on the 15th of February, lord CORRY (son of the earl of Belmore) moved that the house of commons should resolve itself into a general committee on the state of the nation, and consider of an address to the king, declaring an inviolable attachment to British connexion, and representing a separate independent parliament as essential to the interest and prosperity of Ireland.

Lord CASTLEREAGH contended that the motion was not only unnecessary, as it was known that the ministry did not intend to press the measure of union at a time of public irritation, but might be rendered subservient to the views of the disaffected by clogging the wheels of government.

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But, as his lordship did not say that the court was willing to abandon the measure, a debate of the following complexion arose.

Mr. F. KNOX could not witness without alarm the apparent determination of the ministers to persist in an obnoxious scheme; nor was he pleased with the mode in which they attempted to carry it into effect. The dismissal of able and upright servants of the crown, the alternatives of menace and allurement, were not, he thought, the most proper or patriotic methods of effecting any measure. The insults by which Ireland had been degraded in a late celebrated speech *, and the threat of forcing her into a full submission, ought to rouse all the energies of her spirit; and all her true sons would, he was confident, defend their liberties with the greatest vigor, and hurl the thunderbolt of vengeance upon all who should attempt to enslave them.

Mr. TIGHE was convinced of the necessity of the proposed address, as, whatever might be pretended by the ministry, it was not the intention of the court to let the question rest. This, he said, sufficiently appeared from the conduct of Mr. Pitt, who, with an unjustifiable disregard for the feelings of the Irish, had persuaded the British house of commons to offer a set of resolutions at the foot of the throne, tending to the ruin of that independence which was the boast and the glory of Ireland. The country had been highly benefited by an internal and independent legislature; and its future prosperity would be much more effectually promoted by a continuance of such a parliament than by an incorporation with any other.

Colonel Vereker, Mr. Dobbs, and Mr. Handcock,

* Mr. Pitt's speech of the 31st of January.

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were friendly to the motion ; Mr. Vandeleur and Mr. Martin deemed it unnecessary ; Mr. Ruxton and Mr. O'Donel strongly supported it.

Dr. BROWNE did not consider the motion as unnecessary. It was forced upon the house, he said, by the British parliament ; and, if the subject should continue to agitate the nation, it would be the fault of the minister. He then animadverted on Mr. Pitt's speech of the 31st of January, which he considered as superficial, delusive, and weak (however specious) in point of argument. He reprobated the contemptuous manner in which the Irish had been treated by the English, after the unfavorable reception of the scheme of union by the former ; and he declared that, as far as he could at present judge, he should never be inclined to the measure, unless it should appear to him to be absolutely necessary to prevent Ireland from becoming a province of France.

The eloquence of Mr. Barrington was displayed on the same side ; but the attorney-general, with the usual plausibility of an experienced lawyer, opposed the address. Mr. Monsell, though an anti-unionist, was displeased with the motion ; but Mr. O'Hara and Mr. Brooke argued in favor of it.

Mr. G. PONSONBY declared that he was not satisfied with the declaration of lord Castlereagh, as it did not appear to be supported by the British minister, whose pledge for persistence in the scheme was strong and peremptory, or by his associates Messieurs Dundas and Windham, whose language on the subject was disrespectful and contemptuous to the Irish. Alarmed at this behaviour, he wished the house to form the proposed committee, that its opinion might be unequivocally stated, so as to shake the resolution of those states-

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men, and induce them to relinquish an odious measure.—Allusions having been made to the spirit of party, and to the attempts of factious leaders to trepan or delude the country gentlemen, Mr. Ponsonby denied that he was influenced by such a spirit, and ridiculed the affected solicitude of the ministerialists for those gentlemen, ‘who, God help them! know not the *Pitt*-falls with which the ways of parliament are overspread;’ while he thought that, with no guides but common sense and patriotism, they were likely to escape the dangers with which they were environed.—It had been said that to enter into a committee would make a debating society of the house; but he confessed that he had no great antipathy to a parliamentary debating society, and wished to give the country gentlemen an opportunity of fully expressing their opinions on a great national question. He did not wish that a subject so essentially interesting to the Irish nation should be left to the decision of the British parliament, or of the executive power in either country. The representatives of Ireland ought to reserve to themselves the power of exposing the misrepresentations and false reasoning in which the advocates for an union had so freely indulged. No opportunity of this kind ought to be lost; and, while the dreaded measure should remain suspended over the heads of his countrymen, he would firmly persist in contending for the security of an independent Irish parliament.

When the knight of Kerry had delivered his sentiments with spirit against the motion, the new *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose. He expressed his surprise at the inconsistency of those members who on a former day protested against all consideration of the subject, and now brought it forward for discussion. The
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late speech of Mr. Pitt, indeed, was said to have rendered the present motion necessary, as he had pledged himself to obtrude an union on the Irish ; but he did not see it in that light. He then bestowed a high encomium on the speech, and quoted several passages from it to prove that the minister intended to leave the measure to the sober and unbiassed judgement of the people of Ireland, instead of taking any steps which would border on enforcement. He pronounced the motion to be unnecessary as to the present time, inoperative with regard to the future, and contrary to the usage of parliament.

Mr. Smith, colonel Fitzgerald, and other gentlemen, then spoke against the motion ; Mr. Maxwell and others supported it. Among the latter was Mr. OGLE, who, after condemning the union in terms of asperity and indignation, compared the proceedings of the British parliament to the courtship of an heiress against her inclination. The lover says to his friend, that such a lady is beautiful, and possesses a large and improving estate ; for which reasons he is determined to marry her. His friend replies, that she will not agree to a marriage. “ I am confident that she will,” says the lover : “ I have settled every thing.”—“ You surprise me !” exclaims the friend—“ How have you managed ?”—“ I have bribed her chamber-maid,” rejoins the suitor, “ and I have bribed her trustees ; and I *will* marry her.” ‘ This (said Mr. Ogle) seems to be the case with Ireland ; and, in my opinion, the political chambermaid ought to be whipped at the cart’s tail, and every one of the trustees ought to be hanged.’

A speech from Mr. Dawson was enlivened by humorous sallies ; but we have not seen a correct report of it. His chief object was to vindicate the country gen-

men from the imputation of credulity and the charge of faction.

On a division, the numbers were, 103 for the motion, and 123 against it. The result of this debate was not so decisive as either party wished ; for the court had conceived the hope of obtaining a more overwhelming majority, while its adversaries had flattered themselves with the expectation of securing the triumph of national independence.

CHAP. VI.

Deliberations of the British House of Lords on the Union.

THE leader of the British cabinet, though his impatience was disappointed by the spirit and firmness of the Irish, was not so discouraged as to abandon a scheme by which he hoped to establish his political renown, and immortalise the fame of his administration. He still prognosticated the ultimate success of his efforts ; he imagined that the warmth of opposition would be relaxed by time and influence, and that the following year would witness the complete incorporation of the two realms.

After repeated adjournments, the peers of Great-Britain, on the 19th of March, began to deliberate on the resolutions communicated by the commons. Lord GRENVILLE took the lead in the investigation of the subject. In the performance of his duty on this occasion, it afforded him some relief, he said, to find that the two main points on which the resolutions were founded had been sufficiently established to preclude the necessity of dwelling upon them. These were, that the legislature of Ireland had an independent right of deciding upon any proposal of union as fully as the parliament of Great-Britain, and that the interests of the empire at large, and of every branch of it in particular, required the maintenance and improvement of the connexion between the countries.—He then canvassed the objection which had been urged to the time of bringing forward the measure. Far from deeming the discus-

sion unseasonable, he was of opinion, that it was highly expedient and politic to enter upon a speedy inquiry into the merits of the scheme. Its nature had been misconceived in Ireland ; the views of its advocates had been misrepresented ; prejudices and unfounded alarms had thrown an odium on the proposition. To dissipate such delusions, and repel such assaults, early deliberation was necessary, that national animosity might not be embittered or inflamed into a decisive rejection of the offer. Delay in this case would be injurious. It could not justly be thought an ill compliment to the commons of Ireland to discuss a scheme which they had not finally exploded, though it did not appear to have received their strong approbation.

Examining the state of connexion between the kingdoms, his lordship observed, that, if it had been firmly fixed, and attended with great practical advantage, he should have preferred it to the most beautiful theory which the human mind could invent. Practical good was the best criterion of an establishment, or of the state of a country : he had been taught to look to this object in political affairs, and every year of his life confirmed the opinion, that to abandon it for speculative improvement was to run headlong to ruin. But it could not be said that affairs were in so good a state as to preclude all attempts of practical improvement. Every man who had considered the subject had confessed that things could not continue in the same state, and that some great measure was necessary to remedy evils which were universally acknowledged. The adjustment by which the present system was produced, was not, even by those who were immediately concerned in it, considered as final and conclusive. What was the time at which this settlement was made ? It was
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near the conclusion of the most expensive and calamitous war in which this or any other country was ever engaged. Armed for their own defence, the people of Ireland directed their attention to other objects; they claimed independence, and their claim was admitted. Neither by those who were the authors of that independence, nor by the parliament by which it was recognised, was the adjustment of 1782 regarded as final. Farther measures were deemed necessary to consolidate and secure the connexion between the countries. Even if the original framers of the agreement had intended it to be conclusive, yet, as on a fair review it was found to be inadequate, their opinions ought not to prevent the parliaments of both countries from supplying what was defective. Did the settlement in 1782 supply the link which by the abrogation of the former system was destroyed? Did it provide both for the independence of the parliament of Ireland, and for the close connexion so essentially requisite for the common interests of the two countries? The supposed identity of the regal power in both was the only bond and security of that connexion. This in a pure and unmixed monarchy might be sufficient, because the power of the sovereign could be exerted in the same manner in every part. The case, however, was different in a mixed government, where the exercise of authority was limited by the different privileges of its component parts. In Holland, for instance, from the time of sir William Temple to the late subversion of the government of that country, every friend to the united states had lamented the imperfect connexion which subsisted between them, and every enemy had availed himself of the defect. The Americans, on the establishment of their independence, had experienced a

similar inconvenience. The power which existed in each of the federal states was found to be too great, and that of the whole too feeble. It had been thought necessary, therefore, to abridge the authority of the states individually, to draw closer the general union, and to enlarge the authority by which the whole was governed and holden together. Even now, perhaps, it was one of the principal defects in the constitution of the American states, that the power of each was too extensive, and that of the general legislature and government too weak for the public interest and security. The want of a general government, to direct the efforts and employ the resources of the whole confederacy, had contributed to the ruin of Switzerland. Had that country possessed a government capable of employing and directing its united strength, it might have opposed an effectual resistance to the violence and injustice of its perfidious enemy.

Considering the supposed bond of connexion between this country and Ireland, his lordship did not hesitate to say that it was absolutely null. If by the constitution the royal power could soar above the control of parliament, the regal identity might operate as a medium of connexion; but, if the parliament could check that power, and the crown required the aid of the legislature even for ordinary occasions of government, the connexion was nugatory while each realm had a distinct parliament.

The noble secretary proceeded to treat of the chief branches of the royal prerogative, with a view of illustrating the manner in which they were or might be exercised in the two kingdoms. The first branch in order and dignity was that which regarded the ecclesiastical establishment. In England the king was the head

head of the church. Would he be so in Ireland, if the remedies which some had proposed for the evils of the sister realm should be adopted? If catholic emancipation, combined with parliamentary reform, should be carried into effect, what would be the situation of a protestant king with a catholic parliament—a prince who, by the laws of England, would forfeit his crown by being a catholic?

Passing to the judicial branch of authority, he observed, that, under the direction of the same regal power, the same laws could not be preserved in their purity, where they were liable to different constructions. Opposite interpretations would soon be converted into different laws, because there was no place of last resort where differences could be brought under one general principle. Could any thing tend more to prevent the transfer of capital from this country to Ireland, than a despair of finding the same mode and measure of justice which prevailed in Britain? To encourage the transportation of capital to Ireland it was necessary to shew to the people of this country, that, in transferring their property to the sister kingdom, they might rely upon the protection of the same laws by which it is now secured.

Speaking of the fiscal power since the settlement of 1782, he affirmed that there was no identity in this branch. The receipt and expenditure of Ireland were under the control of its own independent parliament. Its whole *fisc* was in a different situation from that of Great-Britain; and, even after an union, a considerable time would pass before they could be identified. Could it be consistent with the general advantage of the empire, that such thwarting and contradictory systems should prevail in its affairs?

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With regard to the military power of the crown, it was true that the forces of the two countries were united, and it must be the wish of all that they should continue inseparable. But might not the parliament of Ireland refuse to pass the mutiny bill? Might not the funds for the payment of the army be with-holden? Might not the Irish legislature have refused to vote the augmentation of pay recently voted by the parliament of Great-Britain? What might have been the consequence if a difference had taken place on that subject? There was already a difference in the two armies as to the test required; and this might produce serious inconvenience.

With respect to the political prerogatives of the king, there was no security against the most opposite conduct of the two countries in the great questions of peace and war. It was possible that the enemy of Great-Britain might be the ally of Ireland. Before the present war, two instances had occurred in which Ireland might have totally differed from the politics of this country. He alluded to the armaments intended against the Spaniards and the Russians. Had a war then taken place, Ireland, instead of engaging in hostilities, might have closely united herself in commerce with the very enemies with whom we were at war. Certainly the powers of an independent Irish legislature enabled it to adopt a line of conduct that would have produced this state of affairs. Upon the present war the opinion of the parliament of Ireland had been the same as the well-weighed and deliberate judgment of the British parliament, that it was a war into which we were compelled to enter—that it was a war for our very existence as a nation. Individuals there had been in this country, however, who arraigned this
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war with every epithet of reproach. If these men had prevailed—if they had persuaded us to think that it was for the interest of Great-Britain that jacobin principles should be diffused throughout Europe, and that France should be allowed to spread her arms and her revolutions as wide as her wishes—and if the parliament of this country had acted upon such sentiments—what would have been the state of Ireland had her parliament viewed the situation of Europe, and the danger of French principles, with other eyes? What would have been the consequence of such a difference? On the other hand, what would have been the consequence if the parliament of Ireland had been of opinion that this was a war of confederated despots against liberty? Could it have been expected to embark in such a war? Could it have called on the people to spend their blood and treasure in a cause so unjust? In case of such a difference, what would have been the connexion between Great-Britain and Ireland? In both countries the crown was controlled by separate parliaments; so that the measures of the executive power, the identity of which was thought a sufficient tie, would be totally different according to the maxims by which the controlling power might happen to be influenced.

There was another point, he said, which deserved notice on this occasion. The ministers in Ireland were appointed by the same sovereign to whom official appointments belonged here. The administration, however, was carried on under the control of the independent Irish parliament, and must be conducted by persons possessing its confidence. Was the crown then to be advised by individuals responsible to the English parliament, to the Irish, or partly to both? In the first case, where was the independence of Ireland? In
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the second case, what was the state of the connexion? And, on the last supposition, how were the imperial interests of the whole to be conducted? During the course of the last two years, the ministers of this country had been severely censured for the necessary measures pursued for the safety of Ireland; measures indeed required by the Irish parliament. When such topics had been agitated, he had always contended that the proceedings so arraigned were under the separate control of the Irish parliament. It could not be doubted, however, that, if a system were really pursued in Ireland, calculated to alienate it from this country, Great-Britain must be interested; but, in the present state of the connexion, how could our parliament interfere with the measures advised and enforced by the legislature of Ireland? What a contest might have arisen, if the house of commons, which rejected the consideration of the question of union, had insisted on the removal of those ministers by whose advice the measure was brought forward—ministers who possessed the confidence of the British parliament!

He then referred to the affair of the regency, in which the two parliaments differed so materially, that both the modes by which it was proposed that the regent should carry on the functions of government could not be right, and in one or other of the two countries the executive power would have been exercised upon principles not compatible with the constitution. A remedy for this evil, indeed, had lately been proposed in the Irish parliament; but, as unforeseen cases might occur, on which a difference might happen between the two parliaments, such an act could not be a sufficient security, because the power that could enact such a law could abrogate it. Not only, he added, the appointment of a regent might occasion disputes;

disputes ; but the crown itself might give rise to a contest. The present title to the crown was created by parliament, which was also competent to alter it. On what foundation then did the succession rest ? It was regulated by the act of annexion ; but the Irish parliament might vary the mode now established. }

Hence it appeared, that the identity of the regal authority furnished no adequate security for the connexion between the countries ; and it was necessary for the general interest of the empire, that some measures should be taken for strengthening this connexion. In the adjustment of a scheme of this nature the local interests of Ireland claimed particular attention ; and, indeed, the proposed plan would consolidate and extend those interests. The evils of that kingdom obviously called for a speedy remedy. The present government unfortunately had not grown up with the habits of the people. The English connexion was begun among them by the worst of all conquests, one that was incomplete and partial. At different times the invaders made occasional progress ; and renewed hostilities kept alive the flame of animosity. Thus the advance of civilisation was retarded in Ireland more than in any other country of Europe. In this predicament did the Irish stand when the Reformation diffused its light over Europe. In England and Scotland it was embraced by the far greater number of the people ; but, though the protestant system was soon after established in Ireland by law, the majority adhered to the catholic persuasion ; and hence a new source of animosity arose. The divisions not only became religious, but continued to involve political feuds. In the reign of queen Elizabeth, the catholics resisted that princess as an usurper ; and the spirit of division produced

duced new contests. James I. merited the praise of having commenced the work of civilising Ireland, and introducing something like a regular government. In the reign of Charles I. the system was pursued, but with imperfect success; for even the wise measures of that great statesman, the earl of Strafford, were not prosperous or effectual, as the rebellion which followed not long after proved. Though the establishment of colonies by Cromwell tended to strengthen the protestant cause, the religious zeal of the strangers inflamed the hatred of the catholics. The Revolution, and the measures of vigor which perhaps the state of the times rendered necessary, contributed to prolong the spirit of dissension. These and other circumstances checked the progress of good morals, of arts, of industry, and wealth. A more liberal policy was at length introduced, particularly in the present reign; and in 1779 the free trade (as it was called) was established. In 1782, in answer to a message from the throne, desiring the parliament of Ireland to state its grievances, a statement was prepared, and redress was speedily granted. But grounds of complaint continued: and some of those who had drawn up the statement had since discovered that catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform were necessary; but, on the evidence of the instigators and directors of the late rebellion, these objects had little share in prompting those who had embarked in the cause. The peasants were indifferent about these points, and indeed could not judge of their nature and effects; but the expressions served as watch-words of jacobinism. The exertions of traitors to corrupt those unhappy men tended to disseminate widely the poison of French principles; and the disordered state of the country promoted the diffusion

sion of such pestilent doctrines. These effects could be counteracted, and these evils removed, by an union alone. The good consequences of such a measure would quickly appear, in the progress of civilisation, the prevalence of order, the increase of industry and wealth, and the improvement of moral habits. The Hibernian protestants would feel themselves secure under the protection of a protestant imperial parliament; and the anxiety of the catholics would be allayed by the hope of a more candid examination of their claims from a parliament not influenced by the prejudices of a local legislature. A free admission of the catholics into the Irish parliament might lead to a subversion of its constitution; but all fear of their preponderancy would vanish under a general legislature, as they would then be far outnumbered by the protestants. The animosities of these rival parties would be allayed; and a tranquillity which Ireland had rarely enjoyed would be the pleasing result.

Of the full competency of both parliaments to the formation of such a compact, his lordship had not the least doubt. The origin and nature of parliament proved this point; and it was the opinion of the best constitutional writers, that the political competency of that body was unlimited. Had not the English parliament concluded an union with Wales, and with Scotland; and was not its competency allowed at the respective times when those events took place? If it should be denied, would not all the acts of the successive parliaments be at the same instant pronounced invalid? Such objections were evidently founded on the principles of jacobinism, or on the modern doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, which he considered as incompatible with all regular government.

In obviating the objection relative to the danger of a
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loss or diminution of the independence of Ireland, he began with contending for what no member had disputed. He argued, that the very notion of compact, on which the union was proposed to be founded, implied the independence of each kingdom, and that the very recognition of the power of the parliament of Ireland to enter into this treaty involved an acknowledgement of its distinct independent authority. He then touched upon the real point in dispute. It was absurd to suppose, he said, that the independence of Ireland would be sacrificed in the event of an union. It would still remain, and even derive fresh vigor from being consolidated with the proudest and most solid independence that ever was enjoyed. Before the union which took place in 1707, England and Scotland were, in fact, less independent than when they afterwards composed the kingdom of Great-Britain. By this union, each kingdom had become more independent of foreign nations, and more independent, if we could so speak, of human events; each had become more powerful, and had increased in prosperity. In like manner, if this legislative union should take place, no individual would suffer in dignity, rank, or condition, but, in a national view, all would receive an addition. When the union with Scotland was in agitation, loud clamors arose against it; but time had shewn that they were ill-founded. No interest of Scotland had been sacrificed; and the country had remarkably flourished since that æra in its agriculture, wealth, and commerce. It was promotive of the general interests of the empire to consult the interests of every component part of it; and, as this had proved true with regard to Scotland, in consequence of an union with that country, so, he was persuaded, a similar measure would operate with respect to Ireland. In providing for the security of that country, the parliament

liament would be at the same time making provision for the general security of the British empire. And what could be adduced as a more powerful motive than this, that both countries were assailed by a common enemy, whose aim was to destroy Great-Britain by making Ireland the medium of that mischief; as, before the union with Scotland, it was the aim of the French to render that country subservient to their insidious designs. At present, the chief hope of resistance to the tyrannical power of France seemed to rest on Great-Britain; and Ireland, in her weak and disordered state, could look to this country alone for support. Her independence was essentially involved in her connexion with Britain; and, if she should shake off that tie, she would fall under the French yoke. Hence, if there were no other motives, the expediency of an union, as a check to the views of the enemy, would appear in a strong light.

His lordship now moved the first resolution, and intimated that he should afterwards request the house to vote an address favorable to the adjustment of a complete union.

Earl FITZWILLIAM declined an ample discussion of the subject, because he deemed the agitation of it unseasonable. It would tend, he said, to inflame dissension, and impair the strength and vigor of the empire. The rebellion in Ireland had arisen from a disunion between the different ranks of the community, and a mixture of religious and political animosity. The same causes had long been productive of evil; but it was not probable that a measure repugnant to the feelings of the majority of the nation would operate as a remedy. If the evils of the country, as some alleged, arose from a separate legislature, would an union annihilate the

British influence which prevailed in that legislature? would it not still be paramount after the conjunction of the two parliaments? Where then would be the remedy? It would be necessary to take other steps; and one of the first ought to be the removal of odious distinctions founded on a difference of religion. The catholics had an equal right with the protestants to a share in legislative functions; and, though formerly the protestant succession might have been endangered by their admission into parliament, no peril could in these times be apprehended from it. Yet this claim was rejected by the illiberal jealousy of bigoted minds.—An improvement of the condition of the people was another object that deserved attention; and this might be effected without an union. But the measure, it was said, would augment the strength of the empire. The earl, however, apprehended that a long time would elapse before it could have such an effect.—The inconvenience and danger of a distinct legislature, he thought, were more visionary than real. The Irish parliament was in some respects independent long before the year 1782; yet no mischievous discord had arisen between that body and the English legislature. No necessity, therefore, existed for the proposed remedy.—To the mode of incorporating the two parliaments in the first instance, his lordship strongly objected. Would not the members from Ireland, he asked, represent the British cabinet rather than the nation which ought to depute them? If a general election should take place, would not the new members be chosen by the influence of a British army rather than by the free suffrages of their countrymen? Might not such proceedings be justly branded as arbitrary and unconstitutional?

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The earl then explained some points in which he was personally concerned. He admitted that, when he undertook the government of Ireland, he was ordered not to bring forward the question of catholic emancipation; but, far from having promised to resist it if any of the members of either house should move for its discussion, he had unequivocally declared that he would in that case give it his strongest support; and he had reason to believe that the late calamities of the country had been occasioned or aggravated by the disappointment then sustained.

LORD GRENVILLE denied all knowledge of the declaration to which the earl alluded, and affirmed that, if the question had been proposed by others, his lordship was to have waited for new instructions from our cabinet.

The marquis of LANSDOWNE then harangued the peers in favor of an union. He first took notice of the manner in which Ireland had long been governed, and animadverted on the irregular and injudicious conduct of its rulers. He enumerated the most remarkable events of Hibernian history from the year 1767; and in this survey he dwelt upon the case of lord Edward Fitzgerald, whose posthumous attainder he reprobated as an act of flagrant tyranny. From the late prevalence of disorder and calamity, he was confident that such a government could not much longer subsist. The evils of the country required a speedy remedy; and an union promised a more efficacious cure than any other measure which could be devised. It was at all times desirable, but was at present indispensable. The danger to which the British dominions were exposed rendered such a step necessary, to obviate irreparable mischief or prevent total ruin.

He then adverted to the proceedings of the year 1782, not from an opinion of any close connexion between that topic and the subject now under discussion, but because frequent reference had been made to that settlement in the debates of both parliaments. Its authors, he said, had no idea of effecting a legislative union; nor did they by any means declare against such a scheme. The present plan could not be said to grow out of the former; nor could the adjustment of that time be properly considered as a bar to any future proceeding.

Pointing out the chief requisites of an union, he mentioned in the first place the necessity of consolidating the armies of the two countries; for, unless there should be such an union of the military establishments as might afford an opportunity of saying with truth that there was only one army, it might be said, with regard to the affairs of the British empire, 'Chaos is come again.' The navy also should be one, furnished by the united zeal of the whole community; for it would resemble patch-work, if one part of the empire should supply a ship and a half, another a quarter, and a third a different quota. There should, at the same time, be only one system of law. Commerce was the next point to be considered; and this ought to be on an equal footing in both countries. The concerns of finance ought also to be assimilated; and, in short, the union, to be effective, ought to be substantial and complete. Some might say, that most of these points were already gained; but, as they were in danger of being lost by the jealousy of the two nations, he wished to render them permanent by an union.

That part of the plan which provided for the addition of one hundred members to the British house of commons

commons did not meet with his full approbation: but, if the majority should see no danger in it, he would not object to it, though he was sorry that it seemed to make as little impression upon some politicians as if it related only to so many flies.

There was one point, he added, which merited consideration: it was, whether the Irish were well or ill disposed to an union. He apprehended that ministers had an insufficient knowledge of the state of the public mind when they brought forward the measure. It was their duty to seek information; and, by behaving with frankness and sincerity, they might easily obtain it. There ought to be no *tricking*, no intrigue, in their proceedings; let them gain their point by manly and honorable dealing, not procure success by corruption, or enforce acquiescence by terror.

It would be prudent, he thought, to calm the irritation of the catholics by a full assent to their demands. Their emancipation could not be with-holden without greater danger than could arise from the grant of it. There was no reason to dread the religion of any body of men: the progress of irreligion was one of the present causes of alarm. 'The question (he said) is not what religion you shall have, but whether you shall be permitted to have any. It is not whether this or that religion shall be destroyed, but whether all religion shall be extinguished. In this state of affairs, every good man is called upon to join the standard of Jesus Christ; or, whatever may be the prevailing religion, all ought to unite against the intrusion of those who have no religion, and who are enemies to every species of it.'

He added, that the present was an awful period, and that the contest was serious and alarming. If wisdom should not interpose, a rupture might arise between the

rich and the poor, calamitous to both parties, but more particularly to the latter. The greatest prudence and the most vigilant caution were necessary to secure the British empire amidst the convulsions of neighbouring states. It was his earnest wish that Great-Britain and Ireland might stand like two rocks in the sea, unmoved by storms, and that the inhabitants of both islands might form the most cordial and complete union for the preservation of property, law, order, morality, and religion.

Earl CAMDEN spoke chiefly in defence of his administration of Ireland. The marquis of Lansdowne having attributed the misfortunes of that country, in a great measure, to the recall of earl Fitzwilliam, and the coercive measures which were substituted for his conciliatory system, the present speaker denied that the recall was productive of disorder or disaffection, and affirmed that the rigorous proceedings of the government were rendered necessary by that seditious spirit which existed independently of the catholic question; a spirit which, far from being embittered by the abortion of the earl's scheme, scarcely manifested itself for nine or ten months after his departure. He traced the principal acts of government from the year 1793, when the growth of factious discontent called for strong measures. He justified the bills which were enacted by the Irish parliament, particularly that which was calculated for the suppression of insurrections; an act which the marquis had strongly reprobated. He declared that all the severities imputed to his administration were preceded by acts of outrage, of insurrection, or of rebellion. He allowed that his conduct in seizing a great quantity of arms, and apprehending some of the leaders of the malcontents, accelerated the rebellion; but, as the same steps

steps facilitated its suppression, he did not think that he could justly be blamed.

He then pronounced his decided opinion in favor of an union. A better form of government, he thought, was necessary for Ireland. The loss of nominal independence would be amply compensated by an increase of security, and by a participation of the real independence enjoyed by Great-Britain.

The marquis TOWNSHEND promised to vote for the measure ; but he was apprehensive that every attempt to render the Irish nation happy would be inefficacious, unless a due obedience to the laws should be enforced by resident magistrates—unless the itinerant catholic priests should be prevented from giving absolution for offences, the stewards and other agents of the landlords be checked in their career of oppression, and the morals of the lower classes of the people be improved by the care of their superiors.

Lord CLIFTON (earl of DARNLEY in Ireland) applauded the conduct of lord Camden in his vice-regal government, praised the speech of lord Grenville, and declared his preference of a legislative union to any other mode of connexion, but doubted the practicability of the measure. The English in general, he said, knew little more of the affairs of Ireland than of those of China ; and, in the present case, they seemed to misconceive the nature of the opposition which the scheme had undergone in that country ; for they represented what was almost the universal sense of the nation as the voice of cabal or the cry of faction. The voluntary assent of the Irish, he feared, could not be obtained ; and coercion would be highly impolitic and unjust. He therefore wished that the scheme might be suspended.

LORD HOBART *, while he approved the conduct which the Hibernian parliament had pursued for many years, was convinced that a legislature, constituted as that was, could not give satisfaction to the people. His meaning was, that a protestant parliament could never satisfy a nation of which three-fourths were catholics. On this ground his determination to support the question of a legislative union principally rested. With regard to the emancipation of the catholics, he observed, that, without parliamentary reform, it would not quiet the minds of the discontented, and that, with such a reform, the power of that sect would be fully established. The repeal of the act of settlement, the ruin of the protestant interest in Ireland, and the rupture of the connexion with Britain, would be the certain or probable consequences of such a change.

LORD RAWDON (earl of MOIRA in Ireland) declared that no one would more heartily concur in the proposed measure than himself, if it should meet the approbation of the greater part of the Hibernian community; but, as it had excited general disgust and vigorous opposition, he was convinced of the danger of prosecuting the scheme. Even if the Irish parliament should be disposed to adopt it, the disinclination of the people ought to be deemed a sufficient ground for relinquishing it: otherwise we might nourish in delusive security a secret fire which might ultimately consume the vitals of the empire. If he should admit the probability of a change in the disposition of the people, he must contend, as the measure was to be suspended, that it was at least imprudent to pledge the British parliament to

* Now secretary of state for the war department, in the room of Mr Dundas.

specific resolutions, which might be superseded by the future relative situation of the countries. Was it to be supposed, that the tenor of the resolutions would alter the sentiments of the Irish nation with regard to a measure which they had contemplated in the aggregate with such distaste? Were the provisions judiciously calculated to promote such an effect? By one of the resolutions the test act was to be still operative against the catholics and the protestant dissenters of Ireland. Was it not imprudent to proclaim openly this neglect of the claims of those sectaries, without any thing that could counteract its impression, except the fugitive hope of a distant admission to the privileges enjoyed by the rest of their countrymen; and thus to establish a strong jealousy, if not estrangement, in the breasts of such a majority of that community whose confidence and concurrence were so desirable? The noble secretary of state had alleged, that it was necessary to lay the detail of the resolutions before the public, to shew that it was not the intention of the government of this country to over-reach the sister kingdom. But the earl thought that in this view they would have come with much better grace before the subject had been agitated in the Irish parliament, than after they had been rejected by so large and respectable a portion of that assembly. They must now appear rather as the vindication of the minister than as the spontaneous offer of England; and, at best, as an after-thought attended with the desire of inculcating those members of the Irish house of commons who had taken the lead in objecting to the union. It was stated in support of them, that Ireland could not go on in its present state. The earl had predicted, that the system of government which had been pursued in that country

country could not go on, and he had unfortunately proved too true a prophet. That, however, was not a consequence flowing from the constitution of Ireland: it was solely the result of a frantic exercise of severities on the part of government, as much in contempt of that very constitution as in defiance of every principle of policy that had hitherto been current among men.

Continuing to animadvert on the speech of lord Grenville, the present speaker observed, that the secretary, in describing the connexion between the countries, was not very correct when he said that there was no other link of union than the crown. He had forgotten ties of a more powerful kind—mixture of blood, the identity of the army and navy of the two islands, and the rights of citizenship enjoyed by the individuals of each kingdom within the other. He had forgotten that the sole discrimination consisted in the separate parliaments. He was no less unfortunate in his illustration of the inadequacy of the present connexion to bind the two countries permanently together. He had descanted upon the inconveniences experienced under the first constitution of the American republic; to remedy which, an executive government had been created for the whole with very extensive powers. This was true; but was the remark applicable to Great-Britain and Ireland, where such an executive government already existed?—The secretary had said, that a case might occur in which the parliament of Ireland might refuse to pay the troops, and seemed to think that his position on this ground of argument was strengthened by the difference of the test taken by the military body of Ireland from that which was taken by the troops of England: but a man might be
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a brave soldier, and a trusty supporter of his country's cause, even though he should believe that there were seven sacraments; and, in fact, there was no separate regular Irish army; for his majesty might call away any regiment to this country, and replace it by another from England, without any explanation to the legislature of Ireland. There was, indeed, a stipulation that Ireland should have a certain number of troops for her defence; and those troops she engaged to pay. But the secretary argued that she might refuse to pay them. She really might; and the British parliament might also refuse to pay the army in this island. To argue, however, from power to probability was a fallacious mode of reasoning; and, when that probability was repelled by the clearest and most permanent interests that could actuate the minds of men, it would be absurd to allow it a moment's consideration. 'Still, let it be supposed that such a case may happen, what will be the utmost inconvenience attending it? That England will be obliged to pay the troops which his majesty has the undoubted prerogative of sending to Ireland and keeping there.'

The earl then spoke to the following purport. 'The noble secretary expatiates on the benefits which an union will confer on Ireland. Possibly he may be right; but the question by which we are to form an opinion respecting the expediency of bringing forward these resolutions, is not what he conceives the Irish *ought* to think upon the subject, but what they *do* think of it. Whether justly or not, it appears that they think the demand upon Ireland is nothing less than the whole body of her laws, her rights, her liberties, her independent parliament, the blood, the labor, the wealth and resources of the people. And under what circumstances

stances does the mass of the Irish nation come to weigh such a supposed demand? Disgusted by recent outrages, still smarting from the lash of late severities, and irritated by threats of continued infliction, how is it to be supposed that they can meet with temper the proposition for drawing closer the ties by which, they have been mischievously told, all their past sufferings were occasioned? For it was one of the most serious evils of the late troubles, that those who were trampling upon the feelings, the properties, and the lives of their fellow-creatures, disguised their own passions under the profession, that such acts of violence were necessary for the preservation of English connexion; thereby falsely representing English connexion, which ought to be the source of every blessing to Ireland, as the spring from which all the calamities of that country flowed. Unjust as the impression is, can the Irishman, until it shall be removed, regard the proposal for an union but as a project to render perpetual those oppressions under which he has been groaning? If the corrections which an union is to apply to the habits and prejudices of society in Ireland are to be flow, though sure, as the secretary of state admits, how can the great body of the community be expected to put such distant and eventual advantages into the balance against immediate and galling injuries? They observe the same executive government, or rather the same individuals in power, professedly destined to be maintained in Ireland. What then can they augur but the same course of rule under which they have hitherto groaned? Must they not regard it as if they were to stipulate for the permanence of all the shame and all the sorrow that have wrung their hearts, or as if they were to promise spontaneous reverence for the lash
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and the torture, however wantonly employed, to bind themselves to perfect apathy towards the cries of an agonized parent or an insulted wife, and to plight their worship of a system which may at any hour consign unheard to a dungeon, themselves, their children, or their dearest friends? Such sufferings they have all undergone or witnessed: and they have justly ascribed them not to licentiousness on the part of the troops, but to the principles and proceedings of government. The British soldier has not a more ardent friend than myself; nor is there any one who can bear stronger testimony than I can to the humanity which accompanies his courage: but excesses and outrages are inseparable from the state of blind suspicion and irritable virulence attendant upon civil contention, and such evils are to be imputed solely to the man whose counsels plunged the country into that feverish condition. The Irish government stigmatised with the name of rebellion that which was only indignation at some unconstitutional measures; and, having once made the charge against its opponents, thence deduced the right and the necessity of abandoning the paths of the law, and of making its own conception of expediency the exclusive rule of conduct towards the multitude. This assumed power was not likely to be temperately exercised by men whose keenest passions were already roused and involved in the contest. The legislature readily lent its aid in passing every penal statute which the ministry represented as requisite to meet the dangers of the time; and the new code, in severity of punishment and in extent of restrictions, went beyond what had before been devised in any country. But did the government abide by these provisions? No; any thing that bore the semblance of law was too tardy for
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its impatient spirit. Forgetting that the corrective conduct of a government ought to be sober as well as firm, dignified and conciliating as well as vigorous, it even seemed to affect the peevishness of individual animosity ; and in that temper it proceeded with eagle swiftness and more than eagle fierceness to pass a sweeping condemnation of the whole people of Ireland. Mercy, justice, and policy, were left far behind, as unprofitable associates. Can you wonder that a nation consigned to such a doom should revolt at an arrangement which it apprehends will only establish the impracticability of relief ? The Irish must think it nonsense, when they are told that an union with Britain will ensure to them the protection of the laws. They had laws for their protection before : but government contemned them, and England supported the infraction. In the nature of the union, there is not any thing that holds forth to the inhabitant of Ireland a security against the violence of the executive government : but many checks upon that government will be withdrawn, so that additional cause of fear must arise. This business has been improperly begun. It ought to have been preceded by measures calculated to appease the Irish, and to make them feel practically the benefits of English intervention. I long ago asserted, that the rigor adopted in the rule of Ireland would not suffer the government to carry with it the affections, confidence, and ready zeal of the people ; an evil in itself of sufficient magnitude. I afterwards warned the house, that nothing but conciliatory measures could prevent, in the minds of the bulk of the Irish nation, an estrangement that must be most injurious to the interests of the empire. I was not believed on either occasion. Subsequently, I said, that, unless the system should be immediately changed,

changed, rebellion in Ireland must be the consequence. There was not any skill in the prophecy ; for I only augured the same result which had invariably sprung from similar oppressions in every age and in every country. I urged these considerations when perhaps it was early enough to prevent the excess of mischief. His majesty's ministers, however, constantly turned a deaf ear to my representations, and treated the subject with more than political apathy, with a gaiety of manner which approached to unconcern. They at length had recourse to means of self-defence, which, whatever was the guilt of one party in the contest, were such as to shock human feeling ; and they now resort to the expedient of an union ; which, whatsoever advantages it may possess in other respects, does not at all apply to the immediate evil.'

His lordship again mentioned, in a tone of indignation, the cruelties which had been perpetrated on pretence of crushing disaffection, but which seemed to him to be the most extravagant means that any government ever employed for extinguishing the discontents of a nation. He did not accuse earl Camden of having given directions for such horrible outrages ; but hinted, that the viceroy, being taught by the cabinet to believe that extraordinary rigor was necessary, had connived at excesses which arose from that system. He did not refuse credit to that nobleman's assertion of the enormous extent of the conspiracy, though he was of opinion that the number of men (500,000) stated by some of the mal-contents as enrolled to serve in the ranks of the united Irishmen, had been exaggerated. That so great a proportion of the adult and effective population of a country should engage in a traitorous conspiracy, was, he added, the 'greatest censure that could be passed
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on any government.' To the misconduct of the British ministers, indeed, he had always ascribed the evils and the miseries of Ireland; but error of judgment, and ignorance of the state of the country, rather than deliberate inhumanity, had perhaps occasioned the impropriety of their proceedings. They at least deserved blame for not having made accurate inquiries before they adopted their rigorous system. This was a sufficient source of sorrow to any feeling mind; and, if the rulers of states should often hear of the horrors of war, and the sufferings of individuals, without a sigh and without pity, the time might revolve in the progress of governments as in the lives of individuals, when remorse would take place of apathy, and when they would earnestly wish that their system of conduct had uniformly enforced on their servants the necessity of respecting with awful veneration the rights of humanity.

Lord Grenville had imputed the rebellion in Ireland chiefly to the propagation of French principles; but the effect of these, without ministerial misconduct, would, said the earl, have been inconsiderable. It was remarkable, that the noble secretary should suppose mere barbarians, whom he represented as incapable of comprehending the meaning of catholic emancipation or parliamentary reform, to be fully competent to the admission of ideas respecting the principles and forms of government, the nature of liberty and equality, and the sovereignty of the people. Of this sovereignty the earl observed *en passant*, that it did not, as some had ignorantly or invidiously asserted, imply the authority or the power of the mob. The misconstruction of the phrase had already had a mischievous operation in this country, by aiding the views of those zealots who,
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from the most malignant motives, confounded the maintenance of constitutional doctrines with the support of jacobinical tenets. The principle, properly understood, was opposed to the odious doctrine of divine indefeasible right. It was not plebeian but national sovereignty; and on this basis the English constitution was founded.—He then reverted to the subject of the union, and again contended that it would be useless and hazardous, in the present state of affairs, to attempt to carry the scheme into effect.

Lord HOLLAND, though he did not consider the adjustment of 1782 as a bar to a new agreement, disapproved the proposal of an union at a time when the Irish earnestly wished for the continuance of a settlement which they had uniformly praised as the foundation of their prosperity. Such a proposition ought to have originated in Ireland rather than in this country; and he thought it particularly ungenerous to proceed to the discussion of the scheme when the very idea of it had excited such strong disgust in that kingdom. The policy of the measure, at any time, would be doubtful; but, in the present circumstances, the experiment would be hazardous, and the consequences might be highly detrimental to the interests of both countries. The union with Scotland was not a case in point; for there was not that close connexion of sovereignty which existed in the case of Ireland, and there was at that time some ground for apprehending a transfer of the Scottish crown to a stranger. It was imagined, that the new scheme would heal the discontents of Ireland; but it ought to be considered, that forty years had elapsed from the northern union before the minds of the Scots were reconciled to it. The Irish were not in a fit disposition for receiving the yoke; and to effect an union

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by force or intimidation, as the ministry seemed to intend, would be unjust and impolitic.

LORD MULGRAVE did not agree with those who thought a discussion of the question unseasonable, or likely to increase the ferment prevailing in Ireland. It appeared to him to be highly expedient to examine the propositions, and record them as the deliberate offers of this country; and it was not improbable that a fair statement of the terms, beneficial as they were, might induce the Irish parliament to consider the subject with coolness and complacency, instead of viewing it with eyes of prejudice.—He was surprised at the declaration of one of the speakers, that the adjustment of 1782 had no connexion with the question. He, on the contrary, was of opinion, that out of that agreement arose the immediate necessity for the proposed union. That adjustment involved four points—two British and two Irish questions. The former were the declaratory law and the resolution of the house of commons by which it was followed. The latter were the removal of the appellant jurisdiction, and the repeal of Poyning's law. It was this repeal that loosened the connexion between the kingdoms, so as to render a legislative incorporation necessary for preventing a dangerous disunion. The inability of Ireland to defend and protect herself formed an additional reason for the measure; and, as it was not only requisite for the security of that country, but was also calculated for the benefit of Great-Britain, it had a strong claim to general support.

The earl of CARLISLE thought it necessary to take notice of some of the remarks of lord Holland. He was surprised that any one should reprobate this discussion as a mark of illiberal or ungenerous behaviour towards

towards Ireland, or should impute to the ministry an intention of obtruding the measure by force. The discussion, far from being improper, was expedient and seasonable. A knowledge of the terms might allay the ferment of the Irish nation; and, whether it should have that effect or not, the people of Great-Britain had a right to know what attention had been paid to their interests in framing the articles. With regard to the insinuation of force, it was sufficient to say that such conduct had been disclaimed by the chief members of the cabinet; and there was no reason to apprehend that they would ever have recourse to it.

Of the adjustment of 1782 he said, that it was adapted to the circumstances of the times, and calculated to remove some grievances of which the Irish had complained; but that, from the nature of the case, it could not preclude such new arrangements as might at any other period seem adviseable in point of policy. That the present measure was of this description he was convinced; and the blessings which it held out to Ireland, as well as the strength which it promised to add to the empire, would induce him to vote for it with the utmost cordiality.

The earl of WESTMORLAND was induced, by some recent parliamentary elections in Ireland, to believe that many of the opponents of the union had begun to think favorably of it, and that there was a chance of obtaining at least a patient hearing of the terms, which, he trusted, would recommend themselves by their beneficial tendency. He discussed, without novelty of remark, the question respecting the catholics; and he also referred to the arrangements of 1782, which, he said, were not intended as final even by the statesmen who were then in power.

The duke of PORTLAND (who soon after spoke briefly in support of the union) admitted, that, though he deemed the adjustment a sufficient remedy, at the time, for the grievances of Ireland, he did not regard it as superseding a legislative incorporation or any other measure which might be devised by the same or by subsequent ministers.

The house now agreed to the resolutions without a division; and a day was fixed for proposing a formal address on the subject. Several peers then distinguished themselves by a display of eloquence and by the exercise of argument; and, though some of the speeches wearied by their length the young and volatile lords, the sedate and reflecting politicians of the house felt themselves interested by the dignity of the theme and the extraordinary importance of the discussion.

As soon as lord Grenville had moved that an address should be presented to his majesty with the resolutions, lord AUCKLAND addressed the house. He observed, that, though the subject had been ably discussed, it was still possible to throw new light upon a question which involved the 'future government and well-being of the greatest empire now existing.' In examining the topic of independence, he admitted that the arrangement of 1782 secured that advantage to the Irish legislature; but, however perfect such independence might be in principle, it must, he said, at all times and in the nature of things be mutilated, and very imperfect in practice. A country which had no means of defence or security but through the aid and protection of a more powerful neighbour could not be considered as possessing a high or effective degree of independence. If two countries so circumstanced should take adverse lines of conduct, either the weaker state would be over-ruled,

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or confusion and all the evils of war would follow. If, on the other hand, uniform principles of conduct should prevail between them, in leading points of common concern, the weaker might be supposed to have thus far sacrificed, virtually and habitually, its exercise of independent power. Applying this dilemma to the known and principal objects of national independence, his lordship asked whether Ireland had, or could have, the power of negotiating, controlling, or rejecting such treaties as might involve the most essential interests of that empire of which she formed a part; whether she had the means of protecting her own commerce, of establishing colonies, or of making and holding conquests—had any property or direct concern in the acquisitions made by the fleets and armies of the sovereign—whether she had, or could have, any naval force, and did not depend, for the direction of her military force, on the opinion of British ministers, responsible only to the British parliament; in short, whether she had, or could have, ‘any control whatever, any interference, or even any concern, otherwise than in a visionary and abstract claim, respecting the imperial transactions of peace and war, alliances and confederacies.’ These considerations, he said, ‘ought to be strong inducements to Ireland, not merely to accede to the proposed union, but to seek and solicit it.’ Even if Ireland had a complete equality with Britain in extent, opulence, and strength, yet the existence of separate and independent legislatures, with one executive power, would render an union desirable, rather than degrading or detrimental to either; but, when the two countries were strikingly unequal in those respects, the inferior state never could possess either real independence or an uncontrolled and safe prosperity, other-

wise than by an incorporative union with its flourishing neighbour. That Ireland had not been gratified with such blessings to a due extent was obvious to every one. While Great-Britain had gradually advanced in civilisation, in arts, and in sciences, an island which enjoyed the same climate, a fruitful soil, and excellent ports, with a numerous people by no means deficient in acuteness, had 'been at all times involved in comparative disorder, poverty, turbulence, and wretchedness.' These evils might be 'traced to the disjointed and jarring action of two unequal powers, closely adjacent to each other, possessing the same interests and subject to the same crown, but with separate legislatures.' It was unnecessary, he added, to refer to a remote period for the ascertainment of the unfortunate state of Ireland, when a review of recent times would suffice. At the period immediately previous to the attainment of a supposed freedom of constitution and trade, that kingdom was subordinate to this realm both in legislation and judicature: it had no more than the name of the British constitution, the 'semblance and mockery of a free government.' Even after the Irish freedom, as it was called, had taken place, such disadvantages existed as were perhaps much greater than those which had before prevailed. A government founded in the pretensions of a small part of the community to a monopoly of the representation, patronage, and resources of the whole, could not be expected to contribute to the prosperity, tranquillity, or safety of the nation, even while the system was 'controlled, directed, and supported by the protestant parliament of this protestant kingdom:' but, when the connexion with that parliament ceased, such a mode of administration became more than ever unsatisfactory to the majority of the Irish, and 'utterly incompetent

competent and unsafe with respect to the general interests of the British empire.' A reflexion on these disadvantages had formerly prompted him to wish for a complete union of the two kingdoms ; and his opinion of the utility of such a measure, both in a political and commercial view, was confirmed by subsequent deliberation.

The remaining part of his lordship's speech chiefly related to commercial affairs, with which he is generally allowed to be well acquainted. He had moved for the production of papers which might elucidate the subject ; and he now affirmed, that the ' interests exhibited and proved in these papers would have more effect than any other consideration in finally accomplishing the union of the two kingdoms.' It appeared, from these accounts, that the value of the imports and exports of Britain in the year 1798 nearly amounted to 95 millions, being higher by 22 millions than the average value of the four last years of peace. It might be said, that the apparent balance of trade in our favor was not so considerable as many might expect it to be, the value of the exports being scarcely a million above that of the imports ; but, in order to arrive at the true balance, it must be recollected, that, for a great part of the imports from our settlements in the East and West Indies, and also from the fisheries, ' no price whatever was remitted beyond what was necessary to carry forward and to maintain the cultivation and supply of those settlements and fisheries.' With this addition, he said, the balance would perhaps be found to amount to eight or nine millions. Some respectable calculations carried it much farther. It was, however, sufficient to know, that the balance was as high as the real and permanent interests of our commerce would bear.

The British manufactures alone, exported in 1798, exceeded 33 millions and a half in value, being higher by 6,477,000*l.* than the average export of our manufactures in the four last years of peace.

Upon the entire trade between Great-Britain and Ireland, the annual balance in favor of the latter kingdom (on an average of three years ending with 1798) was, he said, above two millions ; and, upon the interchange of the mere products and manufactures of the two countries, the excess favorable to Ireland was 3,425,000*l.* With regard to the exports from Britain to Ireland, we favored our neighbours by suffering most of the articles to go free of duty ; and though, in the opposite case, our protecting duties on woollen cloth and some other articles of manufacture were nearly prohibitory, yet the existence of such duties did not derogate from the liberality of our general system ; for, even if they should be abolished, the Irish, in their present circumstances, would be disabled, by their inferiority of capital and of skill, from supplying our markets with saleable articles of those kinds.

With respect to the chief Irish manufacture, that of linen, our liberality, he added, was particularly great. By checking the importation of foreign linen, for the encouragement of that of our brethren, we had given them a sort of monopoly which they found highly beneficial. Of about 40 millions of yards of linen, annually exported to various countries, seven eighths were taken by Great-Britain and her colonies. If Ireland had obtained and enjoyed such an advantage through the indulgence of the British separate legislature, in despite of any spirit of rivalry or jealousy, she would be more likely to increase than to forfeit it,
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when she should be incorporated as a part of the same kingdom, and when Irish representatives should form a proportion of the united parliament.

He mentioned other favors granted by Britain to Ireland; but they were such as required the aid of British capital and confidence to enable the Irish to take the full advantage of them; and that assistance could only be obtained by union.

The general results, he said, were of the following tenor. 'Of the amount of Irish exports to all the world, about eight ninths are sent to Great-Britain and her dependencies; and of the exports from Ireland to this country, amounting in value to 5,600,000*l.* nearly the whole is received in our ports free of duty, but is subject to export duties in Ireland, and contributes there to her local revenue as a charge imposed on our consumption. On the other hand, what we send to Ireland is about a tenth only of our whole export; and about two fifths of what is so sent consist of foreign articles exported free of duty. Though the entire trade of Ireland with Great-Britain is about one ninth of our whole commerce, the revenue received upon it, instead of being one ninth of our customs, is less than the 140th part. For example, Ireland pays only 47,500*l.* in duties of customs upon the whole of her trade with us, at the same time that we are receiving in customs from other nations 6,850,000*l.*; and, even from that small amount of 47,500*l.*, we pay on the average about 35,000*l.* a year in bounties on Irish linen. But it is not merely that the imports from Ireland are free of duty here. What we export to Ireland is highly charged by her. She accordingly raised annually, on her trade with Great-Britain and the British dependencies, by the average of the last three years, a
revenue

revenue of 622,000*l.*, of which sum 194,000*l.* were levied on English products and manufactures. The duties which she levies annually on her whole trade with all other parts amount to about 209,000*l.* Notwithstanding all these encouragements, Ireland, with a population perhaps equal to one third of the British population, has a trade equal to not more than one ninth of the trade of Great-Britain. Lastly, the small and disproportionate commerce which she possesses is almost entirely dependent on British generosity, and on laws made in Great-Britain.'

That this enumeration of favors might not be misapplied, as *exprobratio immemoris benefici*, he disclaimed all invidious ideas of reproach or menace, and represented his views as being sincerely conciliatory. As the benefits conferred on Ireland were liable, without an union, to a sudden explosion, which might ruin all the Irish interests dependent on trade and manufactures, it could not, he said, be unfriendly or ungenerous to point out to the party obliged the means of giving effect and permanency to the favors which were granted. 'Can the superior country be expected to enrich the inferior, beyond certain limits, without having some security that the strength and resources of the one may be considered as the strength and resources of the other? Is it to be expected that capitals and commercial credit shall be transferred to a country struggling under an anomalous, incompetent, and disturbed government, and maintaining a claim of right to adopt at any time adverse connexions and interests? Nothing less than union can satisfy these questions. We cannot rest on the flimsy and undefined protestation so often repeated, and so imperfectly realised, that 'the affections of Ireland are inalienable, and that both kingdoms

kingdoms shall stand and fall together.' Let the union take place, and all commercial distinctions and political jealousies will be annihilated; for there can be no competition between two parts of the same kingdom, having incorporated interests directed by one legislature.'

He then summed up the benefits which Ireland might derive from the measure, in these words:—'the preservation of her actual advantages, the extension of capitals, the increased employment of her people, with the consequent cultivation and softening of their minds and manners, and, above all, the introduction of a middle class, one of the great wants of Ireland, and the most important link of security between the highest and lowest orders.' He was not so sanguine, however, as to suppose that an union would at once 'dispel the cloud of foreign war and domestic treason which had so long darkened the Irish atmosphere.' It might tend, he said, to correct the pestilential exhalations; but that effect would be gradual, perhaps slow. He looked rather to the effect which would be produced on a return of peace. Ireland would then be governed like the rest of the British empire; a new order of things would take place; and the manners, principles, and opinions of the two islands would at last be assimilated.

Having mentioned the disinclination of revolutionists to the measure as a strong recommendation of it, and spoken of the separation of the two kingdoms as the 'first object of the unprincipled and implacable nation which is making a wild and cruel war on the liberties of mankind,' he added, 'In this awful period of crimes and calamities, amidst the subversion of states and empires, and when the whole system of human affairs seems

seems to be convulsed and endangered, the great and glorious fabric of British liberty stands unmoved and unshaken. We offer to Ireland the full participation of our happiness and security : and, unless Providence shall have withdrawn from her all mercy and protecting influence, unless the dispensations are to be such as to number her among the wrecks of nations, she will gladly and gratefully receive our offer, and will become an integral part of the united kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland *.

The bishop of LLANDAFF, though not inclined, in his advanced age, to mingle in political discussions, could not refrain from delivering his sentiments upon a subject which he considered as the most important that ever engaged the deliberation of their lordships. He had contemplated the subject with profound attention ; and, so long ago as the year 1785, he had intimated his opinion to the late duke of Rutland, that he and his friend the minister would gain immortal honor, if, instead of the propositions which were then under discussion, they could accomplish, by honorable means and upon equitable terms, an union of the two kingdoms ; but his grace answered, that the man who should venture to bring forward a scheme of such a nature at that time would be *tarred and feathered*. Whether the repugnance to the measure was then general, or was confined to the leading men of the country, the prelate did not know ; but he was so far from approving such repugnance, that he was fully convinced of the policy and utility of the scheme. His decided

* Before this speaker resumed his seat, he referred to the catholic question, and observed that the measure of the indulgences granted to the catholics of England ought to guide the discretion of parliament with respect to those of Ireland.

opinion

opinion was, that a legislative union would be more beneficial to Ireland than it would be to this country, though it would be very advantageous to both. It would enrich Ireland, and would not impoverish Great-Britain. The consolidation of Ireland with this country would render it the strongest empire in Europe. If the lands in Great-Britain and Ireland should be well cultivated, as in the event of an union they probably would be, they would maintain a population of thirty millions; six millions of which number would be capable of bearing arms; and this population, in case of necessity, might afford one million to be in arms, without distressing agriculture, manufactures, or commerce. With the power of exerting such a military force, with a navy extended in vigor and resources, with the energy and spirit produced by a free constitution, what could such an empire have to fear from all Europe combined? Then we might with safety despise the politics of the continent, and, without contributing our forces or our wealth, allow the princes of Europe to settle among themselves the equilibrium of despotic power, while, conscious of the blessings of liberty, we must lament that despotism should exist in any part of the world.

The subject of an union, he said, involved so many different points, that to do justice to them all would require a discussion far exceeding the limits of a short debate. There were two or three questions, however, on which he would make brief remarks. Among other objections to a legislative union, doubts had been started whether the Irish parliament had a right to vote its own extinction; and the objection, if well founded, was equally applicable to the British parliament. Vo-
lumes

lumes might be written on the question, and it would still remain undecided, unless the principles on which it ought to be decided should be previously adjusted. The question involved these points. What was the quantity of power, and what was the quality of the trust confided to parliament? These, doubtless, were questions on which unanimity could not be expected; but upon them depended the solution of the difficulty respecting the rights and competency of parliament. Upon the question of right he said, that right and obligation were correlative terms; for, if men did not know what was right, they could not understand what constituted obligation. With regard to the catholics, some contended, that, as they formed the most numerous class of the community, they had a right to some kind of ecclesiastical establishment, and to an exemption from political disabilities. This point was rendered difficult by the distribution of property, which was in the hands of a small minority, who would have no interest in, and would derive no benefit from, such establishment. The point was of great delicacy and importance; but, the sooner it should be agitated, the better it would be. This he would say in reference to the subject when it might be discussed, that nothing could ever be expedient without being just and lawful, though many things were just and lawful that might not be expedient. In the mean time he would recommend to both parties the advice given by a father of the church on another occasion, that both should give up little things in order to secure great ones, tranquillity and peace. There was another point upon which it would be difficult for all the prospective wisdom in the world to form an accurate judgement.

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It was this—what would be the change introduced by the incorporation of so many Irish members into the parliament of this country?

During the discussion of the grand question in Ireland, some (said the bishop) contended that an union would secure the tranquillity and the prosperity of that country; and in this sentiment he fully concurred. Others there were who admitted the necessity of a connexion between the realms, but were disinclined to an union, as inconsistent with the interests and prosperity of Ireland. This opinion had been maintained by so many men of great ability and integrity, that he was almost led to distrust his own judgement. There was one simple mode of reasoning, however, which he should oppose to their elaborate arguments. Surely, when connexion was deemed so necessary, the more close that connexion should be, the greater advantage it might be expected to produce. He did not understand that in political bodies the physical law prevailed, by which, after two bodies were attracted to a certain degree, repulsion would ensue. The link which now held the two countries together was very imperfect, as had been ably shewn by lord Grenville on a former occasion. At present the link was the sameness of one of the branches of the legislature in both. This link, by what had been foreseen, and what was unforeseen, might be endangered, and the interests of Ireland might be exposed to hazard; but, when three parts of the legislature of Ireland should be incorporated with the legislature of this country, the failure of the link would be impossible, except in an event dreadful even to contemplate—the absolute destruction of the whole government and constitution.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, he added, when he referred to the expressions used by those who recommended connexion without union, he might not sufficiently understand their meaning. Did they mean that our manufactures and commerce should be crippled to promote those of Ireland? No; the Irish were too generous to require such a sacrifice. Did they mean that Great-Britain should spend her last guinea in armaments to defend and protect Ireland from foreign and domestic enemies, without deriving any return of advantage? Did they mean, that, while England should be at war with Spain, France, or any other state, Ireland should be at liberty to continue at peace, and to refuse to contribute any supplies for the prosecution of a contest with the enemies of this country? Surely this was not the connexion that was acknowledged to be so necessary. What then was to be this connexion? If it was that the two countries in a common struggle should exert their common strength for their mutual defence; that, with a reciprocation of benefits, a mutual sentiment of inseparable interest should be entertained; the scheme differed from legislative union only in being less efficient for mutual defence, and less calculated to promote the particular interests of Ireland.

In urging the necessity of close connexion, he affirmed, that Ireland, as a shoot from the stem of Great-Britain, had brought forth fruit; but that, as a separate plant, it would neither strike its roots downward, nor spread its branches above; it would bear no fruit for at least an hundred years. It must either be shaded by the British oak, or it must be poisoned by the pestilential vapor of the tree of French liberty—that tree which had brought forth no fruit but the apples of Sodom. It would be happy for the world if
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great states would allow the smaller ones to enjoy their independence unmolested; but this, in the present state of mankind, was more to be wished than expected. As this was not the case, Ireland could not stand alone. In the present state of Europe she must be united either to England or to France. Even if she were at liberty to choose, without renouncing her allegiance to his majesty, with which of these countries she should connect herself, could she hesitate? United to Britain, she would be a beautiful, vigorous, well-looking limb—united to France, she would be a meagre, shriveled, miserable, and stunted branch, liable to be cut off whenever the caprice or the circumstances of her associate should demand the sacrifice.

Fully convinced of the beneficial tendency of an union, he looked forward with satisfaction to the change which it would produce in Ireland. English capital would seek employment in Ireland, and diffuse improvement and wealth. The bogs would be converted into fields covered with smiling harvests; the barren mountains would be covered with cattle; mines would be wrought, and canals would unite the most distant parts of the country; the old sources of wealth would be extended; new ones would be discovered; and the inhabitants of Ireland, now poor, idle, and discontented, would be rendered rich, industrious, and happy. This change he could not live to see, as improvements so extensive, under the most favorable circumstances, must be the work of time; but posterity would bless the wisdom and firmness of the parliaments of two countries which effected so great a plan, and, generously superior to partial views and selfish considerations, coalesced into one for mutual interest. An end so desirable, however, ought to be prosecuted

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only by honorable means. Union was in the nature of a contract, or rather it was a contract of the highest kind; and it was of the essence of a contract that it should be founded upon free consent, arising from a persuasion of utility. He was afraid that Ireland was not yet persuaded of the advantages which she might derive from it, and that she had not taken that comprehensive view of the subject which would be quickly followed by her full consent. In such a case this nation and the parliament of this country ought to shew that they were not actuated by any narrow and selfish views, and that they disdained to employ any corrupt influence for the purpose of obtaining that concurrence which ought to be the result of conviction. At the same time they ought to deprecate all opposition arising from partial views, local interests, selfish considerations, or what, with liberal minds, might have weight no less powerful, the love of popular applause: they ought to shew that they respected the independence of the Irish parliament, and that they were ready to acquiesce in that decision which, after due deliberation, it should embrace. Such alone was the course suited to the high character of the British nation; and such indeed was the course which the legislature had avowed its determination to follow. This proceeding alone was consonant with eternal justice and with the dignity of the country, fitted to conciliate the affections of the Irish, a high-spirited but warm-hearted people.

In the present contest, he said, all our firmness and energy were required. France was supported in every country but her own, no less by the sword than by her pestilent doctrines, and by the corrupt ambition of the desperate. Armed with these instruments of destruction, she went on, spreading desolation where-ever she appeared,

appeared, crushing in the dust equally all civil government and all ecclesiastical establishment. When he contemplated this hideous monster at a distance, it was with horror; near, he viewed it with anxiety, but without despondence, trusting that, under the protection of Providence, this country would be able to meet the danger. No human means, he was convinced, could contribute more to this end than a liberal, free, and equitable legislative union between Britain and Ireland.

Lord MINTO declared, that, as the talents, learning, and eloquence, of two countries, had preceded him in this discussion, he would content himself with stating *a few thoughts* on the principal and leading topics. But, notwithstanding an introduction which promised so little, his speech was long, argumentative, and elaborate; and it therefore requires a copious abstract.

The first proposition which struck him, in deliberating on this question, was the convenience, amounting indeed to a necessity, not merely for the benefit, but for the preservation and security of both countries, that there should subsist between them a connexion of one species or other. A total disconnexion, he said, would expose both to the greatest quantity and variety of evil that could be imagined. This point seemed to be conceded by all except the zealous partisans of France; and, even if it were not so generally admitted, he did not think it necessary to argue it at length. A glance on the map, and a moment's reflexion, would convince every reasonable person, that the affairs and interests of these sister islands were 'too much the same, in too many points of foreign and domestic concern, not to be necessarily associated in the dangers

and business of war, and in the occupations and pursuits of peace.' In a state of total political separation, there could hardly be a single transaction, or an instant of their existence, in which they would not be rivals, and, if rivals, enemies; and, while each country possessed in a great degree the means of offence, and those of defence in a less degree than in any other possible situation, the evils of contest would be enhanced and aggravated. If one of these states should be engaged in war with a third, mutual jealousy, aided by the intrigues of the enemy, would probably embark the other neighbour in the quarrel; and such a war would be much more dangerous and mischievous than ordinary hostilities. To prevent such evils, connexion was necessary between countries thus circumstanced.

The next point of discussion related to the best and most eligible mode or form of connexion. On this point he had a settled opinion, which he considered as a 'main and principal hinge of the argument.' The proposition was, that, if two countries should be so situated as mutually to require connexion, the only mode of perfectly removing the evils of separation, and fully conferring the benefits of union, would be a complete identity and incorporation of their governments. All other relations would be imperfect, subject also to many inconveniences, and would not merely be of precarious duration, but would inevitably tend to a total extinction.

Among imperfect relations he first mentioned that which was the consequence of victory, and which generally included the slavery of the conquered nation. This would certainly be deemed the most objectionable mode of connexion. He then treated of federal relations;

tions; observing, that constitutions of this kind, while they professed to provide only for some common interests, usually established a distinctness, and even an opposition of interest, on all or many other points; that the opposition of such states would often extend to the very *casus fæderis*; and that they were more afraid of giving a paltry advantage to a friend and associate, than solicitous to defeat the common enemy or promote general safety. He was disposed to think, that the late sudden and rapid overthrow of the government of the United Provinces might be traced to those causes, and that the calamities which had overwhelmed the Swiss cantons might in part be ascribed to the same origin.—Proceeding to those connexions which were formed by one point of identity, such as that of one king with separate parliaments, he appealed to our own experience for the insufficiency of such a bond, and afterwards inquired into the source of the evils of these imperfect relations. The connexion ‘being partial and intended for partial purposes,’ the great mass of interests in each nation continued to be in some measure divided, the attention of each country was still pointed towards a separate view of individual interest, and the public mind was kept distinct. In these circumstances, trivial discontent was frequently fanned by jealousy into the flame of hatred. If the countries should be unequal in power and influence, the inferior state would retain merely a nominal independence, which would be accompanied with an irksome consciousness of real subordination. This contrariety of the real to the nominal condition of the country, he considered as the chief source of evil, from its constant tendency to the production of acrimonious jealousy. The ruling passion of the people

in the less considerable state would be an 'angry, impatient, and intolerant love of their independency : ' they would take advantage of times of distress or peril to extort concessions from the other state ; each victory of this kind would lead to a new claim ; and the improvement of independence would be pushed forward by patriots or demagogues to the true goal of that course—namely, separation. From the calamities in which such an event might involve both countries, the only sure refuge and sanctuary would be found in an incorporation. This reasoning being confirmed by experience, he looked to the union of Great-Britain and Ireland as an event more than probable. The two countries seemed to him to approach each other by an irresistible attraction, by a species of political gravitation : no human obstruction, he thought, would long avail to keep them asunder ; and, when they should once be in contact, another law of nature, a principle of adhesion and tenacity, would hold them together, and eternally cement and consolidate their union. But, though the event thus seemed to be predestined, the best means of accelerating it ought not to be neglected.

For the illustration of his argument, a recourse to our own history was, he thought, sufficient. The inconveniences and evils of the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy led to the establishment of the English monarchy ; and the salutary effects of the change appeared in the ultimate preservation of the kingdom from Danish conquest, by which the divided states would otherwise have been enslaved.—Wales, subdued by the first Edward, was connected with England by an imperfect political tie, the two nations being governed by the same sovereign, but enjoying only a partial conformity of laws and institutions. This connexion was attended with
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the prevalence of mutual outrage and petty warfare, till Henry VIII. administered the only perfect remedy for such disorders, by effecting a legislative union.— With Scotland the English attempted to enforce connexion by conquest; but their efforts were unsuccessful; and the violence of contest continued till the accession of James I. Then commenced a century of partial relation, disturbed by jealousy and disgust, which brought the two countries to the alternative of separation or close union.

He then traced the connexion between England and Ireland from the relation first formed by conquest to the mitigated dependence of the latter realm, (when, with a distinct parliament, it was subject to the English legislature,) and to the independence which it acquired in 1782. As a crisis of difficulty and danger furnished the true touchstone by which the virtue of mutual engagements might be proved, he appealed to the disastrous testimony of the present times, not only for the inadequacy of the existing system to the due protection of the community and support of the state, but for its fatal efficacy in augmenting the peril and hastening the common ruin. He acknowledged the loyalty, prudence, honor, and spirit, of a great part of the Hibernian nation, while he lamented that these qualities had not been able to prevent an extensive conspiracy for the avowed purpose of separation. As this object had occasioned a civil war, the evils of imperfect connexion were at their height; and the two governments were called upon, by the great danger of their countries, to snatch the people from the precipice on which they stood, and conduct them into that path which had led the Welsh and Scots to ‘more than safety,’ to dignity, prosperity, and happiness.

Referring to the practical inducements which might recommend a legislative union, his lordship divided into positive and negative the advantages derivable from it to Great-Britain. To the former class, he said, belonged the real and effective force which would accrue from it, in a naval and military view ; and, in using the latter term, he chiefly alluded to the advantage of avoiding, in times of contest and of war, those embarrassments and distractions which rendered Ireland, instead of a resource, 'only a dead weight hung round the neck of British exertion.' These difficulties, he thought, were so great, that the continuance of connexion between Britain and Ireland became problematical and precarious. He did not say that Ireland would inevitably be lost without an union ; but he feared that we should have no security for her preservation, if the bonds of connexion should not speedily be drawn much closer. With such apprehensions he deemed it not unseasonable to contemplate the consequences of a total separation of Ireland from Britain, and of the probable attendant on such a rupture, the alliance of the former state with the French. As an Irish democratical republic, or rather anarchy, would be the first result of the separation, we should immediately feel the disastrous effects of such a change. Those who ought to be our friends would then be our enemies ; our western coasts would be greatly endangered ; our trade would be injured ; and a variety of evils would follow, all of which, if the French should become absolute masters of the new republic, would be alarmingly aggravated. This being the greatest peril to which the British empire, either with regard to 'its power and greatness without, or its security, freedom, and independence within,' ever had been or could be exposed,

exposed, he had no hesitation in assenting to the measure, on the mere view of the question as it respected Great-Britain. This consideration might perhaps be thought in strictness sufficient for the attention of the British legislature, as the parliament of Ireland was competent to deliberate and decide on every part of this question which might regard the interest of that kingdom : yet he could not but think that the same interest was also a very material point for the deliberation of the British parliament ; for, though an entire union with that country might seem desirable on a separate view of British interest, it would in his opinion cease to be so, if it were not likewise beneficial to Ireland. An union, if it should be destitute of the tie of reciprocal advantage, would not cure the evils of imperfect relation, or even those of separation.

He then enumerated some of the consequences which would result to Ireland from the separation. As it could not be supposed that the nation would be unanimous in rejecting British connexion for the purpose of fraternising with the French, the event, he said, would not take place before one party, now the strongest, should have been subdued. But submission to force would not change the mind ; and the republican rulers of Ireland would find, that the British troops, when employed in the rescue of that country from the Gallic yoke, would be seconded by a great portion of the inhabitants. Hence would arise the complicated miseries of foreign and internal war. The charges of such a contest would fall with oppressive weight on a people hitherto protected in a great measure by Britain ; and the insulated trade and wealth of Ireland would not furnish a sufficiency of men or of money for such importunate demands. In such a predicament, her danger

ger from offended Britain and despotic France might easily be conceived. These perils seemed to command her, with the authority of urgent necessity, to seek refuge without delay in a close union with Great-Britain.

He could not overlook some remarkable circumstances in the internal and political condition of Ireland, which seemed strongly to invite the nation to an union, for the purposes of equal government, and of civil and municipal happiness.

‘ Ireland (he said) is a divided country, but unequally divided as to property and numbers; the least numerous class possessing the property and the power; but the most numerous entertaining, and indeed cherishing fondly and tenaciously, claims on both. I need not detain your lordships by describing the extent or the violence of those passions which inflame and exasperate both parts of the Irish nation against each other. Every one knows the firm and immoveable basis on which their mutual hatred stands, the irreconcilable nature of its motives, its bitter, malignant, and implacable character. In this frame and temper of mind, however, towards each other, one of these portions of Ireland claims and exercises what is felt by both to be a species of dominion over the other. I believe it is hardly too much to say, that there are two nations in Ireland; the one sovereign, the other subject. The sovereign class or cast of Irishmen claim their sovereignty as of right, and ground it on an old title of conquest, confirmed, as they contend, by possession, acquiescence, and prescription. They claim also the federal support of Great-Britain in maintaining this dominion, on the solemn grounds of fidelity to implied compact, compensation for sacrifices, and reward for services.

services. They shew a close alliance and identity of views between themselves and the English interest in Ireland at all times ; and they rely as strongly on recent and even on present exertions in a common cause, as on the uniform tenor of their ancient services. In a word, they call at once upon our honor and our gratitude, and support that appeal by a stream and series of facts which we cannot controvert. I must confess that I have always felt this point as constituting a true and proper dilemma. On the one hand, I cannot admit the ascendancy of one part of a nation over another part of the same nation, to the extent and to the purpose claimed in Ireland, as capable of assuming any character deserving the denomination of right. That which is wrong on one side cannot, intelligibly to me, become a right on the other. Wrong is not a material out of which it appears possible to construct right ; and I do not think that the virtues of possession, prescription, or any other limitation of time, which are supposed to cure the vices of a bad title, are at all applicable to the case of perpetually subsisting, and, as it were, renovating wrongs, especially such as affect the political rights of great numbers of men. The operation of prescription in confirming titles, even in the private transactions of property, is indeed different, I believe, from the common notion that is formed of it. Prescription does not cure the original vice of a bad title ; but, after all memory of the good title, which had been supplanted by the usurped one, has been lost and buried under the oblivion of time, prescription (that is to say, the lapse of time within which legal memory can survive) determines the expiration of the old title, and gives effect, not to the bad one which first superseded

perseded it, but to a new title arising out of possession, and consummated in this manner by the completion of prescriptive time. Nothing of this applies to subsisting and continuing wrongs, in which the length of their duration, and the frequency of their repetition, instead of diminishing the injury, must be felt to be high aggravations, and, instead of converting wrong into right, seem only to improve and fortify the title of those who suffer, to shake off the injury on the first opportunity that offers. If possession then will not constitute this singular right which is claimed in wrong, as between the parties themselves, neither can it be improved by the interests, the engagements, or the obligations of a third party; and I do not see how the *jus tertii*, as it may be called, of England, can affect the relative claims of these two Irish nations, or of these two parts of the Irish nation. On this ground, therefore, and merely on this general and abstract view of the question, I confess I might have thought it difficult to assign a sufficient reason to preclude his majesty, as sovereign of Ireland, from concurring with his Irish parliament, or even from exerting, in every lawful way, his legitimate powers in promoting such measures as might be calculated to place every class of his Irish subjects on an equal footing as to civil rights, and consolidate these two hostile nations into one peaceable and united family. But in truth your lordships know that nothing can be less rational, or more dangerous, than these abstract views of practical questions, affecting the interests of multitudes and of nations. In the blind pursuit of abstract right, we shall often find ourselves the instruments of great practical injustice and oppression. I believe there are few cases to which this observation
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applies more closely, than to that which we are considering. The catholics of Ireland claim not only political equality in the government of their country, a claim in which I cannot help sympathising with them ; but they are known to entertain, and to nourish yet more fondly and anxiously, claims of a very different nature. We cannot be ignorant that the first application of those rights with which we should be disposed to invest them, is likely to be the perpetration of a great wrong, and that, at bottom, that wrong was perhaps the true and eventual object of their actual demand, and would be the practical result of its attainment. They not only claim a participation in the civil franchises enjoyed by their protestant countrymen ; but they foster claims on the *property* of protestants, the present possession of which they treat as mere usurpation ; and these claims are of no trifling extent. We know the aspiring character of their church, or, if you please, of all churches, or of all bodies and descriptions of men. We must, above all, recollect, what is perhaps more urgent than all the rest, that the catholics, besides their claims civil or religious, have passions to gratify, passions long irritated, long restrained, but not on that account less vehement or dangerous. I have heard such apprehensions treated lightly, as the productions either of imagination or ignorance ; but, without pretending to any credit on such points from personal knowlege or inquiry, I must profess a strong impression, that, if to the physical force already possessed by the catholic body, and which consists in superiority of numbers, were added (by any such revolution as that which we are considering) the advantages of political power, and the weight and influence which belong to the authority of government

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and legislation, some danger might accrue to the property, the establishment, and even the personal security of the protestants in Ireland; and, with this apprehension in our own minds, the alarm expressed by those who are so deeply interested in the consequences of such measures, seems entitled to our serious and earnest attention. I am not more clear in thinking the catholics entitled to a fair participation of the civil and political franchises of Irishmen, than I am in feeling, that the protestants ought to be protected and defended in the security of their property, their religion, and their persons, against every violence which the catholics might be disposed to attempt, when they have passed from their present state of subjection to that of authority and power. The dilemma, therefore, has hitherto consisted in this. The protestants could not be supported in that ascendancy which seems necessary even for their protection, without derogating from what may appear to be a natural right of the catholics. The catholics could not be supported in their claim of equality, without transferring to them that ascendancy which equality of rights must draw to the larger body, and which from that moment must expose the protestants to dangers from which they ought to be protected. Such seem to be the practical difficulties in the way of abstract justice, while the government of Ireland continues merely local. An Irish parliament, in which the ascendancy is either protestant or catholic (and it cannot but lie on one side or the other), may be expected still, I fear, to gore and lacerate the country, by one or other of the horns of this dilemma: and I see no perfect remedy for Irish division, and its lamentable consequences, while these two enraged and implacable opponents are still shut up together, are still enclosed

enclosed within the very theatre, on the very *arena* of their ancient and furious contention. I sincerely think that this divided and double condition of the Irish people requires something of an imperial *aula*, a legislature founded on a broader and more liberal basis, to administer impartial laws to all, and to reconcile security with justice. While one of these parties must judge the other, in whichever hand the fasces may be placed, I fear there is reason to expect only violence in the suit, and, if not injustice, at least slow and imperfect justice in the decree. My mind, I confess, cannot resist the conviction arising out of all these considerations, that the united parliament of Great-Britain and Ireland will, in the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, constitute a better legislature, and a more perfect because a more impartial parliament for all Ireland, than any representation of a minor part or section of that country, in a separate local parliament, ever can. I am persuaded that laws beneficial to the mass of the people of Ireland, and promoting its general prosperity and happiness, may be expected with greater confidence from the united parliament, in which local partialities, interests, and passions, will not divert the straight and equal current of legislation, than in an Irish parliament, where these stumbling-blocks must for ever bend or impede its course. In the united parliament right may be done unaccompanied by wrong. Irish catholics may be invested with their political capacities, without the slightest danger to protestant establishment or property. These, on the contrary, must acquire a tenfold and hundredfold security in the protestant parliament, and the genuine protestant ascendancy of the united kingdom. The protestant church and property may be secured, without perpetuating the present humiliating and

and degrading exclusion of the catholic part of the Irish nation. Such are some of the particularities in the condition of Ireland, which appear to me to add, in her case, many powerful inducements to those which, in every other instance, may invite neighbouring and friendly countries to a close and intimate union of their governments.'

For these reasons, he advised the insertion of an explicit article in the treaty or act of union, providing for the just claims of the catholic Irish; but he was not strenuous or decisive in his recommendation; for he added, that, 'if any political peculiarities of the present time should render it impracticable to engross these wholesome provisions in the written treaty itself,' he would rather repress his wish for the immediate accomplishment of this desirable end, than 'expose this great transaction to needless and unprofitable hazard by unseasonable pertinacity or impatience,' and would be content to leave it to the mature consideration and impartial judgement of the imperial legislature.

Proceeding to a discussion of some objections to the measure, he took notice of that which appeared to have been the 'most operative and successful throughout Ireland, and to have had the greatest share in the rejection of this salutary proposal,'—namely, the notion that a legislative union, however beneficial it might be to Ireland, would derogate from the honor and national independence of that country. This objection, he said, appealed more to the feelings than to the judgement; but, as the feelings which it excited were not unnatural or dishonorable, it ought not to be repelled with harshness or severity. The mere application of reason and argument would be sufficient.

In an analysis of that branch of patriotism, which, besides

being solicitous for the welfare and happiness of the people inhabiting our native land, might 'attach a sort of interest, and a certain importance and value, to the separate political existence, or individuality, of that country,' he observed, that it involved particularities which seemed to bear in some degree on the principal question; that it appeared to be regulated not only by space but by time; that the space to which it attached itself was what we were accustomed to consider as our country in our own time; and that, if it had been larger or smaller at our birth, our love would have expanded or contracted itself accordingly. An instance of its expansive property appeared at the union of the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy, when the inhabitants of six conquered kingdoms transferred their allegiance to a prince who before was the sovereign only of the seventh, and the minute partialities of those six countries transgressed their respective bounds, and, in obedience to their interests, dilated, as by common consent, so as to occupy the whole surface of the united kingdom of England, accommodating themselves to this change of boundary with ease and rapidity, in the very season of repugnance and disgust which succeeded to conquest. The same truth was evinced at the incorporation of Wales with England; and, though one of the peers (lord Holland) had referred to a proceeding of this house in the year 1713, as furnishing some ground for a supposition that the Scots were not soon reconciled to the union of their kingdom with South-Britain, it did not appear that a real wish to dissolve it existed in the minds of many. Their patriotic feelings soon expanded to the whole compass of the island; and they did not consider themselves as degraded by their political

political amalgamation with the other natives of Britain.

After these examples, the object for which Ireland had been 'persuaded to renounce and reject with anger the greatest and most evident advantages that were ever offered to a nation,' would, he thought, appear to be inadequate and unsatisfactory. It was a sentiment which it was difficult to define: it was so limited in duration, and so obsequious to events, that to speak of its expiration would not be sufficient. 'It actually (he added) changes sides; and the very sacrifices we would make to it at one period, will, at a subsequent point of time, and thence ever after, prove as offensive to this very feeling, as it (*they*) might be welcome and grateful to it before. What then is this mighty object to which such sacrifices are required? It is an airy unsubstantial sentiment; it is a transient, evanescent, metaphysical point, to which we are called upon to sacrifice not only the solid and substantial, but the permanent and perpetual interests of two great nations.'

The succeeding remarks on this part of the subject are so liberal and judicious, that we cannot refrain from quoting them. 'I confess I cannot persuade myself to rank a sentiment so subtile, and subject to so many refined and delicate modifications, with that sound and genuine affection (for I can class it only as a subordinate mode of that plain and manly passion) which has deserved, by excellence, the style and dignity of patriotism. True patriotism will, I think, be found to rest on the solid basis of some rational and useful principle, which will keep it uniform and uninfluenced by time or circumstance, and which may serve as a criterion to distinguish its own genuine and steady course

course from the capricious and irregular motions of some of its many counterfeits. The love of our country may be rational or fantastical as that of any other object; and I must consider patriotism as partaking sufficiently of the nature of general affection, to acknowledge it for genuine, only when it is evinced by solicitude for the welfare of its object. I fix on this as the distinctive character of sincere affection, whether for our country or for any other object of regard. Public love is founded in utility, and by that mark alone may challenge its descent from heaven. The rest is all spurious, and to be viewed rather with caution than respect. On this clear principle, then, shall we not say, that a true patriot proposes to himself, before all things, the prosperity and happiness of those who inhabit his country? He may set a value, if he pleases, on the distinct existence, the individuality of that country; but, if his love be well regulated, and all its modes and affections be in due subordination, he will prefer the solid and real happiness of his country to its metaphysical identity. It is to this chaste and disciplined patriotism, that I would appeal on the present question, against the noisy and clamorous pretence which would usurp its seat, and bear away the decision by acclamation and tumult, before a sober and enlightened judgment, founded on the solid basis of public utility, can silence this importunate and delusive feeling. To sum up my argument on this point, in plain (but, I think, satisfactory) terms; if a separate political existence is contrary, nay fatal, to the real interests of the people of Ireland, and if a perfect incorporation and union with the British empire must be productive of security, aggrandisement, and happiness to Ireland, such an union should, on this single but decisive ground of great

and permanent utility, be the first and fondest wish of every Irish heart.'

He then endeavoured to convince the Irish, that, even if the propriety of their sentiment of national pride should be fully admitted, they would not attain their object by rejecting the offers of Britain. According to every moral probability, the alternative would be 'union or separation; that is to say, union or ruin; union with Great-Britain, or slavery to France.' If the proposal should not be accepted, Ireland would not remain in her present state; her distinctness, her dignity, her independence, would expire; her political extinction would be accomplished; she would become subject to the degrading yoke of the 'general tyrant and task-master of Europe.'

Considering the question in another point of view, with a temporary dismission of all thought of the real interests of Ireland, or of the chances of separation and its attendant calamities, he compared the present condition of that realm in mere dignity, with its eventual state in that single respect after the union. Viewed as a separate kingdom, it still remained, he said, in some particulars, dependent, subordinate, inferior. He would not maintain, that the necessity of claiming occasional assistance from Britain; or the commercial advantages derived from the liberality of this country, ought to be deemed indicative of the subordination of Ireland. But he contended, that, as the connexion already subsisting between the countries required an uniformity of counsels in affairs of imperial concern, and as such unity could only be obtained by leaving the direction of those points to one of these nations, Ireland, as the less considerable and powerful of the two, 'must, and ought to, follow in the wake of Great-Britain.'

Britain.' For the acquiescence of Ireland on these occasions, the nature and frame of our connexion with the country, he said, had provided some securities. The king of Great-Britain was, in virtue of that crown, king also of Ireland; and the whole executive government of the latter realm was administered by a viceroy, who was appointed in effect by a British minister, and responsible only to the British tribunals. To these instances of subordination it might be added, that the legislative functions of the sovereign of Ireland could be performed only under the great seal of Britain. Thus the Irish parliament was left 'dependent for the validity of every one of its legislative acts, first on the chancellor of England, and, through his responsibility, on that very parliament of England, an equal participation in the authority of which is thought so degrading to Ireland.' Another circumstance denoting inferiority was the following, which appeared to his lordship to be, 'such a singularity in the condition of any country claiming the character of independent sovereignty,' that he could not exclude it from his list. 'Ireland must take her part in all the wars of Great-Britain: she must bear her share of their burthens, and must incur all their hazards: she may lose a province, or may become herself a province of the enemy; yet she cannot, by the utmost success of the war, acquire an acre of new territory to the Irish dominion. Every acquisition made by the forces of the empire, however great her share may have been in the danger or exertion, accrues to the crown of Great-Britain.'—'Ireland (he subjoined) claims no sovereignty in any one of the foreign possessions or provinces of the British empire.'—The Irish parliament has never asserted or conceived the right of legislating for any of the con-

quests of the king of England, that is to say, of the king of Ireland.—Ireland has planted no Irish colonies, but has furnished planters to all those of Great-Britain.’—‘If we were asked to define (his lordship farther said) or at least to describe an independent sovereignty, should we err much by saying, it is a state which can make war and peace, which can acquire dominion by conquest, and which can plant colonies and establish foreign settlements? And if we would describe a subordinate and dependent country, could we do it better than by saying, it is a country which must contribute its quota to all the wars of a neighbouring kingdom, must incur all the risques of those wars, and partake in all their disasters, while all that is acquired by its success falls, like the lion’s share, to that country with which it claims to be co-ordinate and co-equal?’

From this representation it would sufficiently appear, he thought, that Ireland, in various instances, had a very small share of the dignity of independence. But, after the union, her condition would be very different; for it would be the same in all points of dignity with that of Great-Britain. An union which would place the two countries on a footing of perfect equality would necessarily improve the independence and dignity of the inferior, which, no longer subordinate, would fully participate in all the rights of sovereignty. It had been said, that Ireland would be annihilated by such a measure; but this would not be the case; for, though she would forego her individuality, she would preserve her existence in full vigor, and be ‘identified with a larger whole;’ and a new scope would be given to the pride, a more extensive field opened to the patriotism, of every Hibernian.

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The objection which imputed to the two parliaments an incompetency for the adoption of the plan, was discussed with prolixity, if not with complete cogency of argument. To obtain a distinct and substantive judgement respecting this question, it was proper, said the noble speaker, that it should be uncomplicated with any other consideration, and tried in a case of admitted expediency. He would therefore, for the purpose of argument, assume it as a conceded point, that the union would be beneficial to both countries; and his adversary in this case must assent to the measure as expedient, denying only the authority of parliament to execute it.

He then, in strong language and a high tone, asserted the amplitude and extent of parliamentary authority.

‘ If a measure be expedient, I am to ask, in the first place, why may it not be executed by parliament? And, in the next place, if parliament is not competent, where shall we find a more adequate authority? I have for me the general rule and law of the constitution, which establishes the universal authority of the legislature, and defines it by no limits or qualification that I am acquainted with. Whatever the whole nation could do, if there were no parliament, is within the regular and fundamental powers of parliament. This is admitted to be the general rule; and here I might plant my foot, at least until the exception were specified, and the principle of that exception established. The universality of parliamentary power has been characterised by the strong and emphatic title of omnipotence. And, in the theory of our constitution, strong and emphatic as this phrase is, it is not, I think, merely a bold figure, as it has been called by some

writers on our government, but seems to be literally and correctly descriptive of parliamentary supremacy, and of the unlimited sovereignty of the British legislature.

‘ I am aware of the reply generally made to this assertion of unlimited power. I may be told, that powers unlimited in theory are yet finite and controlled in practice, and that, in its exercise, the most unbounded authority is still circumscribed, at least within the moral boundaries of right and wrong. I assent to this restriction, and even assert it; but what does my adversary gain by this concession? Parliament ought not to do what is wrong, and is to be supposed incapable of doing it. In this sense, the power of parliament is no more limited than the Divine Omnipotence itself, which is incapable of evil. I say also of parliament, that it is incapable of evil; and I say it in this sense, that what parliament does is not to be accounted evil, but is to be taken and acquiesced in as right. Why? it will be said, Is not parliament composed of men, and therefore fallible? Yes; but who must judge the fallibility of parliament, and to whom must its questionable acts be submitted—if it be not to other men, yet more fallible than themselves? For I wish to know where men are to be found, or in what forms or combinations they are to be assembled, to whom such a superlative authority could with safety be confided,

‘ The more we turn this argument, and the more carefully it is viewed on all its sides and bearings, the more we shall be satisfied, that the only security we possess for every thing valuable in the British government—all that conduces to order and happiness—the whole efficacy of our constitution towards its great and beneficial purposes—reside in this single principle, of the

the unlimited, unqualified, supremacy of parliament. There is no appeal, acknowledged in the constitution, from that authority, because no appellate tribunal can be imagined, habile to such a jurisdiction; none from which the wisdom of those many ages, which have brought our constitution to maturity and excellence, has not already constituted an appeal, final and conclusive in all cases whatever, to that very parliament, from which you would again appeal back to them. Observe the vicious circle into which this appeal from the parliament to the people must lead us. The people at large cannot conveniently, nor safely for themselves, make law, or administer government. The constitution of parliament has therefore been framed, as affording the most commodious and perfect organ of law and government, and the best and most secure depository of the sovereign authority. But their acts must, it seems, be questioned, and their authority superseded by that very people at large, whose inability and unaptness have given occasion to the institution of parliament. The speedy resolution of the argument into this contradiction and absurdity is manifest.'

As the claim of unlimited power might be opposed by the counter-claim of a right to resist an abuse and perversion of authority, however legal this might be, the peremptory assertor of the former claim was led to consider the question of resistance. This he termed 'one of those mysteries, the acknowledgement of which is much connected with its recluse sanctity, and its being withdrawn from daily and vulgar contemplation, to be reserved only for the great occasions which are worthy to draw it forth.' It ought not, in his opinion, to be too closely or curiously examined. Stated theoretically, it was always a snare. When a practical instance

instance should arise, it would answer for itself. Every case of this kind 'must stand as it were upon its own individual responsibility, and must be such as to provide for itself, without the aid of any antecedent principle to lean upon.' Such cases must 'look for no support from law,' being all in direct contradiction to the 'particular constitution,' as well as to the 'general principle of government.'

Reverting from this topic to the question of competency, he contended for the affirmative on various grounds. The first circumstance observable in the union being an extension of territory, each country being augmented by the accession of the other, he supported this effect of the measure by alleging, that, as the same power was committed by the constitution to an authority more narrow than that of the parliament (the prerogative of the crown alone), the legislature had certainly a right to exercise it. Though, in the next place, the union would extend the parliament itself, and would thus amount to an alteration in the frame and condition of that body, he still deemed the legislature competent to this act, as the change would be consonant with the general spirit and genius of the constitution. If the king could add a spacious territory to the country already governed by parliament, without giving to his new subjects a share in the representation, the whole legislature, *à fortiori*, must be allowed to be competent to the enactment of a smaller change in a mode strictly constitutional. Even if the change should be much more considerable, so as deeply to affect the constitution of parliament, yet, as being neither more nor less than a law, it would fall within the natural province of our regular legislators. The various laws for limiting the duration of parliaments,
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for regulating elections, for altering the qualification of electors or elected, for disfranchising offending boroughs, and communicating their franchises to strangers—that is to say, for example, to the freeholders of a neighbouring hundred—had been enacted by no higher authority than that of parliament. What were all these and other proposals of reform, but laws for the alteration or the subversion of the constitution of parliament? ‘To me (said his lordship) they have appeared little short of revolution, incipient revolution. Yet I have never heard one of those who, with similar views of these projects, have been better qualified than myself, by talents and weight in this country, to oppose them, object the incompetence of parliament to entertain and to adopt these changes in its own constitution, if they should appear expedient.’—He added, that an alteration of the established religion, which had always been the work of parliament, was another change, and a most fundamental one in its constitution, since the whole parliamentary franchise, whether elective or representative, was transferred from one class and description of the people to another; and that the laws which had passed for altering and regulating the succession to the crown bore a strong analogy to the case in question, amounting indeed to a total change in one whole branch or member of the parliament. The allegation of incompetency, therefore, could not be maintained as a general objection; and it was perhaps intended to refer only to the transcendent importance of the proposed measure, which might be thought to exceed the ordinary capacities intrusted to the parliament by our constitution. But the point of superior moment was so far from favoring the denial of competency, that it was the very ground on which the

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claim of exclusive parliamentary cognisance would most firmly rest.

On what principle, he asked, had the trust of legislation been originally committed to parliament? Because no community could ever exercise a democratic legislation in its entire and theoretical purity. Even under the patriarchal system, the most ancient and simple of all constitutions, the legislative authority was possessed by fewer individuals than the whole even of the small populations of that period. In large states, still less could it be supposed that all the inhabitants could legislate for themselves. Applying this remark to our countrymen, he said,

‘ They cannot make law for themselves in any democratic form of constitution : they are not provided or acquainted with any institution which should enable them to perform this feat of self-legislation, even if they were desirous of attempting it. They have no *comitia* ; no assemblies of the people in Hyde Park, or St. George’s Fields, to the decrees of which the millions of absent Englishmen owe, or choose to acknowledge, any obedience. And there being a physical impossibility to collect their voices individually, even if that impossibility were not the weakest objection to such a mode of legislation, there is an established organ of the general will, qualified by its frame and constitution to apply the collective wisdom of the nation to its collective interests, and to administer the sovereign power of the state on this secure and solid foundation. The sovereignty of parliament, thus explained, is in the end no more ; it is neither more nor less, but identically and precisely the same with the sovereignty of the people itself, appearing in the only visible, tangible, or perceptible form in which it can be recognised in this country,

country. It is, then, first, 'on the vices and inabilities of all other modes by which the voice of the people can be expressed, or even their opinions formed agreeable to their general and collective interests; and secondly, on the peculiar and approved excellence of the constitution which we enjoy, that the sovereign authority of parliament has been established.'

Affecting to devise some better mode of collecting in a popular way the sense of the nation with regard to points of policy or law, his lordship exercised his pleasantry on meetings 'convoked by anonymous hand-bills in the fields adjoining to this metropolis, and directed by orators on carts, tubs, or other moveable *rostra*,' on the 'fellow-feelings of such a legislature for the suffering felons, traitors, or mutineers, in Newgate and Cold-Bath Fields,' on county meetings at the 'Georges and Angels,' and on the idea of appealing from the parliament to the 'magistrates at quarter-sessions, grand juries at assises, churchwardens and overseers of the poor at parish vestries.' The 'convivial parliaments' which meet at taverns, and carry on a 'jovial system of legislation,' by moving resolutions in the form of toasts, agreeing to them in bumpers, proposing laws in stanzas to the tune of a ballad, and passing them in full chorus, were also the objects of his jocularity and sarcasm.

Concluding that such assemblies as these were utterly incompetent even to the ordinary business of legislation, he argued, that, in cases of high import, they were still more inadequate, and that an appeal to the people on the present question was much less to be recommended than even in those common cases in which no friend of the constitution would think it necessary to have recourse to their decision.

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The point of competency he afterwards considered as it stood on authority, of which, he said, there were two sorts,—the opinions of learned and eminent men, and precedent. To the learning of various corporations in Ireland, of the freeholders of different counties, and of some barristers, the sentiments of the chancellor of that realm, and of the chiefs of the four supreme courts of law, might, he thought, be fairly set in opposition. The unequivocal sense of the Irish house of peers might also be mentioned as an authority of some weight; and it might be presumed, that, as the opposers of the union in the other house did not venture to involve in their question a denial of the competency of parliament, the majority did not consider the incompetency as a point which could be satisfactorily supported. But perhaps the single authority of lord Somers might be deemed sufficient to decide this question in favor of the plenary authority of parliament.

The precedents to which he referred for a proof of competency were the union of Wales with England, and that of Scotland. In each case, he said, parliament alone sanctioned the measure. The Revolution was not exactly such a precedent as lawyers would term a case in point; but he did not think that the declaration of the vacancy of the throne was a point of less note or value, or of a lower rank in the scale of sovereign functions, than either of the former unions, or than that which was under contemplation. When a dissolution of the government seemed to have taken place, on the abdication of James, the ‘supposed dormant title of the people to administer the sovereignty in their own persons, so far, at least, as regarded the re-integration of the deficient and truncated government,’ might have been expected, if ever, to be awakened

awakened and called into action. But the whig advisers of the prince of Orange did not recommend any application to the people at large in a new or anomalous form: they only proposed such means as approximated to the regular constitutional authority, when an entire conformity with it was impossible. Every thing was then settled in a parliamentary form, without the least reference to any unusual organ of the public mind. These instances of constitutional whiggism, these maxims of wholesome liberty, would, he trusted, be preferred by his rational hearers to the spurious philosophy, the sophisticated abstractions, which, far from lighting them to the temple of freedom, would decoy them into the toils of wretchedness and slavery.

Other topics would have been discussed by lord Minto, if he had not been conscious of prolixity in the investigation of former points. Having expressed his gratitude for the attention of the peers to his arguments in support of the expediency of the measure and of the competency of parliament to its execution, he concluded with praying for its speedy accomplishment.

LORD BORINGDON appeared to some disadvantage after the peers had heard with general approbation the harangues of the three preceding speakers: but he supported the propriety, policy, equity, and liberality of the measure, by remarks not injudicious; and lord HAY (earl of Kinnoul in Scotland) argued on the same side. Indeed, on this day, no speech was delivered in opposition to the union, though a protest against it was signed by the lords Holland and King, and the earl of Thanet.

The address being voted, a conference was holden with the commons on the following day; and the deputed

deputed lords then proposed, that it should be offered to the throne as the joint address of both houses. The commons readily promised to take this point into consideration ; and of their almost unanimous assent to the proposal of the peers no doubt was entertained by the public.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

*Renewal of Debate in the British, and also in the Irish,
House of Commons.—Suspension of the Scheme.*

THE commons did not concur in the address to the king before they had subjected the plan of union to a fresh discussion. Several speakers who had not yet taken any other part in the question than that of giving a silent vote, wished to address the house on the subject; and some of those who had already spoken were desirous of exhibiting their opinions in a new or a stronger light.

On the 22d of April, when Mr. Pitt had moved that the house should join in the address voted by the peers, Mr. SYLVESTER DOUGLAS delivered a copious (some would say, a tedious) harangue in favor of the union. With respect to the point of competency, he argued, that, if parliament did not possess such authority, it could not be exercised by any body or description of persons. To the people at large it could not safely be confided; and electors had no other power than the mere act of election.—In the settlement of 1782, he said, there was nothing which could preclude the present measure; for it was obvious that one parliament had no right to bind another, and, in the nature of things, such a body must always have the power of ordaining whatever might promise to be beneficial to the empire. That this adjustment had greatly promoted the trade of Ireland, he did not believe; for it progressively

gressively flourished for many years before that time.—That, after an union, there would be no parliament for Ireland, was a remark which he would not admit to be well-founded. The representatives sent from that country would take proper care of its interests, and the British members would pursue the same object amidst other concerns. A native of Ireland who had been chosen a member of the parliament of Great-Britain could not constitutionally vote otherwise than as an Englishman or a Scotchman; but, if an union should take place, he might fairly vote as an Irishman, wishing to favor his native land.—That the losses and inconveniences occasioned by the absence of the opulent would be aggravated by an incorporation of the parliaments was another objection which he deemed invalid. Scotland had not experienced such an effect; and there was less reason to apprehend that Ireland would suffer by it.—To the allegation that the generality of the Irish disapproved the scheme, he did not reply by an absolute denial of the truth of the assertion (though he said that almost all the nobility, and nineteen twentieths of the property among the commons, favored the procedure), but by affirming, that, if it were true, there was a probability of a change of their opinion, and that those who were convinced of the utility of the measure might publicly propose and recommend it without fear of just censure.—Other objections to the scheme were answered by the learned gentleman, before

Lord SHEFFIELD rose in the same cause. This speaker hoped that no attempt would be made to force an union upon the Irish, but that it might be left to their good sense to accept or reject it. He entered into various commercial calculations with a view of promoting

moting its success, and contended that an infusion of British capital and industry, of British arts and manufactures, would meliorate in every respect the condition of Ireland, but that without an union such a communication could not be expected.

Sir FRANCIS BURDET represented Mr. Pitt as a very unfit minister to bring this measure to a happy conclusion ; for all the efforts of such a man, he thought, would inflame rather than heal the wounds of Ireland. On one ground he strongly opposed it. On the introduction of a hundred Irish members into this house, accompanied with the ministerial policy of converting the militia of each country into a standing army, for the pretended defence and protection of the other, every hope of a reform of abuses or redress of grievances would vanish, and the two countries would be driven to the exercise of reciprocal oppression.

Mr. BUXTON vindicated the premier from the censures thrown out by the baronet, who, among other charges, had accused the minister of being the chief author of the evils and calamities of Ireland. Those mischiefs and miseries, he said, could alone be imputed to the pestilential societies of whose existence sir Francis could not be ignorant. He added, that, if the union should not be effected, Ireland would in all probability become a province of France ; or (to borrow more expressive language), ‘ instead of being shaded by the British oak, it would be poisoned by the deleterious tree of French liberty.’

Mr. HAWKINS BROWNE and major-general LORTUS declared themselves friendly to an union, though the former was doubtful of the expediency of introducing a hundred Irish members into the British house of commons.

Lieutenant-general FITZPATRICK thought it unnecessary to vote the address, as the grounds of the measure were already before the public, and as the ministers had disavowed all intention of prosecuting the affair during the present indisposition of the Irish to the measure; and he added, that an appeal to the crown upon the difference between the parliaments would argue a want of delicacy, and might be productive of fatal discord and division. With regard to the chief tie now subsisting between the countries, erroneous opinions seemed to him to be entertained. It was not merely the crown, but the power of stopping Irish acts of parliament in this country, which constituted the great bond of connexion. This had been deemed sufficient by him and many others in 1782; and he was still satisfied with the arrangement.

Mr. CANNING considered the refusal of an answer to a solemn message as a novel mode of showing respect to the crown, and did not regard such silence as more respectful to the Irish parliament. The royal communication was entitled to some notice; and it was proper that a party which wished to treat, particularly that which was superior in power, and had a benefit to confer, should explicitly state the nature and the terms of the offer. Such an explanation could not be either an insult or a disadvantage to Ireland, whatever might be the event of the negotiation. It was said that the pursuit was hopeless, and that perseverance would be absurd; but the gentlemen who advised a dereliction of this measure had been remarkably forward in urging a continuance of supplications for peace, when success was equally or much more improbable. There was no reason to despair of the accomplishment of the scheme. A more mature consideration

tion would, he thought, ensure to it with the whole legislature of Ireland that approbation which it had already received from a part. It was absurd to suppose, as some of its adversaries pretended, that it would be injurious to the honor or independence of Ireland. Such would rather be the effect of any plan of connexion without legislative union. One of the expedients proposed by the anti-unionists, as he understood it, was a settled scale of proportional contribution. This proposal he condemned as much more degrading and destructive to the character and constitution of a house of commons than any thing which would result from an union. He then asked, how the valuable right of impeachment could be exercised by an Irish parliament against the king's ministers in Great-Britain, his proper and constitutional advisers in the affairs of Ireland. In another point—the power of limiting or altering the succession to the crown—Ireland was destitute of that power which Britain enjoyed; and, indeed, the perfect equality and independence which the parliament of that kingdom was now said to possess, and would resign in the event of an union, did not appear to him to exist. On the other hand, by assenting to an incorporation, Ireland would obtain various benefits, political, commercial, and general, and would become equally independent with Great-Britain.

He took an opportunity of vindicating his friend Mr. Pitt from the charge of having kindled the rebellion, for the purpose of bringing Ireland more completely under his yoke. He attributed the commotions principally to the influence of jacobinical doctrines, and ridiculed the absurdity of ascribing them to the recall of earl Fitzwilliam, or to the machinations and the conduct of the premier. He digressed into a survey of

former administrations during the century, rather with a view of displaying his eloquence, than of proving any point really connected with the immediate subject. He concluded with remarks more apposite to the question. Though the Irish had given way to the quick impulse of feeling, it did not follow, he said, that they were merely creatures of passion. He was confident that a fair appeal to their understanding would meet with proper attention; and, as the address would involve such an appeal, it claimed the support of the house. He admitted that no union but that of affection could be lasting or advantageous: but, said he, 'if the present measure shall be found upon examination to offer solid and permanent advantages to Ireland, let us not be apprehensive that the proposal of it by Great-Britain can long be construed into insult or unkindness. If from this root shall spring and thrive the peace, the prosperity, the happiness of Ireland, the affections of the Irish people will grow and flourish with them: they will be engrafted on the same stock, and confirmed with the same strength: *crescent illæ, crescetis amores!*'

After some observations in favor of the settlement of 1782 from lord William Russell, and renewed objections to its finality from Mr. Pitt, the address was adopted by the commons; and, on the 26th, the sentiments of both houses on the subject were communicated in due form to his majesty.

On a recurrence to the proceedings in Ireland, we are required to take notice of a debate which preceded the presentation of the British address; for, though it was not the intention of the government to revive the question for direct discussion in the same session in which it had been so ill received by the Hibernian commons,

commons, yet, as a bill was brought forward by the anti-unionists to preclude future difference between the parliaments of the two realms in the appointment of a regent, the lord-lieutenant's secretary would not neglect the opportunity of referring to that scheme which he regarded as the only remedy for the grievances of his country.

When Mr. Fitzgerald (on the 11th of April) had argued in support of this bill, lord CASTLEREAGH opposed it as a delusive measure, which, while it pretended to obviate the *effect*, left the *cause* of the evil untouched, and would not prevent the disagreement of two independent legislatures, by whose opinions the regent must be influenced. This discordancy and other grievances, he affirmed, arose out of the constitution of the year 1782; and the sooner that agreement should be superseded by a close union, the better would it be for Ireland.

Mr. FOSTER, the speaker of the house, now delivered his sentiments at considerable length. His first aim was to demonstrate the finality of the settlement of 1782. To prove this point, he entered into a prolix discussion, the greater part of which might well have been spared. He particularised the parliamentary proceedings of that year, from the delivery of the king's message, proposing 'such a final adjustment as might give mutual satisfaction to both kingdoms,' to the alleged accomplishment of the wishes of Ireland. In the course of this detail, he censured Mr. Pitt's observations on this topic as unsatisfactory and delusive, and ridiculed the folly of those courtiers who had eagerly disseminated in Ireland the speech of that minister. This he termed a pakry production, and declared it to be 'the merest tissue of general assertion without proof, high-

flowing language without meaning, and assumptions without argument, that he ever read.' He contended, that 'not only the language of the ministers of the time, but every circumstance of the proceedings, shewed that further constitutional measures were not in contemplation.'

We may here observe, that, from his laborious and minute endeavours for the ascertainment of an object of no real moment, the speaker seems to have been sensible of the weakness of the ground on which he stood. But, whether he was thus conscious or not, we cannot compliment him on the success of his argumentative efforts.

There was one point which he brought forward as 'a new and incontrovertible ground' of constitutional permanence and finality—namely, that modification of Poynings' law which secured the continuance of the connexion between the kingdoms, by rendering the great seal of Britain necessary for every Irish law, and making the British minister responsible to the British nation, if any bill tending to injure the empire or to separate Ireland from it should receive the royal assent in the western realm. This regulation, he argued, was intended to secure union and connexion on a firm, lasting, and unalterable basis.

As the existing constitution conferred benefits which could from no other system be so confidently expected, he saw no reason for a change or a subversion of it. Ireland had gradually flourished under it; and the rash quackery of an incorporative union would, he feared, obstruct the welfare and prosperity of the country.

For opposing such an union, and having recommended the commercial propositions of 1785, he had
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been accused of great inconsistency. But he denied that any remarks which he then offered necessarily bound him to the support of the present scheme. Though he then expressed his wish for the establishment of an united interest in commerce, he did not allege the necessity of a complete conjunction of the two parliaments. He had affirmed that things could not remain as they were: he now said, that they had not remained as they were; for 'the evil of commercial jealousies acting upon the laws of two independent legislatures, had been remedied by the good sense and mutual interest of each country, from time to time passing all laws necessary to prevent such inconvenience.' He added, that not an atom of the constitution would have been surrendered by the plan of 1785, but that the new system would lead to its utter annihilation.

The pretences for a legislative union did not appear to him to be well supported. The risque of a disagreement on the subject of peace or war, or with regard to foreign treaties, would not justify the adoption of a measure so unconstitutional. The sovereign might make war or peace, or contract alliances, without consulting either parliament; and it was a very rare case for the peers or the commons of either realm to oppose his wishes, or declare that he had acted improperly. Though there was a *possibility* of a serious difference of opinion between the parliaments, the *probability* of it was not so great as to require a surrender of the constitution for the purpose of preventing such discordancy. The case of regency afforded the only apparent foundation of alarm; but the bill now under consideration would remove all apprehensions on that head, if the act of annexion, and the law respecting the
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use of the great seal of Britain, had not sufficiently obviated the danger.

The arguments adduced for an union of the two legislatures were, he said, equally applicable to the union of the two houses of either parliament. These might disagree, and ought, by parity of reasoning, to be formed into one assembly. Where would then be our constitution? It would yield to monarchical or republican despotism. The balancing principle composed the chief excellence of our constitution; and why might not the two legislatures, guarded by one head, perform national and imperial functions in a better and more efficacious manner than a combined parliament? As the present system was admirably calculated to promote political welfare, it would be the height of imprudence to sacrifice it to idle speculation: posterity would execrate the memory of those who should be guilty of such rashness, and who should evince so little regard for the happiness of future ages.

Mr. Foster then took a review of the trade of Ireland, and declared his opinion, that it would not flourish more after an union than under a resident parliament. It was already in a thriving state; it enjoyed all desirable freedom, and required only the care and attention of its natural protectors.

On the subject of religion he was not so diffuse as on other topics, scarcely making any other remark than that an Irish parliament might adjust all points in which the protestants or catholics were concerned, as judiciously and effectually as an imperial legislature. He did not attempt to answer the argument drawn from the danger of granting to the catholics, under a separate legislature, those

those favors which might be safely conceded after the accomplishment of an union.

With the following spirited appeal, he closed an harangue to which both parties listened with unusual attention, and which drew from the anti-unionists enthusiastic applause.

‘ Were I to address the catholics, the protestants, and all religions, I would say, your country is in danger ; a desperate attempt is on foot to seduce you to surrender the independence of your parliament. You are all natives of the same island, interested in its trade, its prosperity, its freedom, and in all the blessings of a glorious and happy constitution—bound by every tie of duty to yourselves, your country, and your posterity, to preserve it, join all hands and hearts together, bring the vessel into port, forget all family differences, all local or partial jealousies, and save Ireland, save your country. Tell the bold minister who wants to take away your constitution, that he shall not have it, that you will not be his dupe ; that you love Britain as a brother, but you will be his brother, not his dependent ; and that you will not degrade yourselves from an independent kingdom into an abject colony.

‘ To any of you who have doubts on the measure, I would say, these very doubts call on you to vote against it. Do not hazard a change where you have a doubt, a change from which there is no return—accept it, you have it for better for worse, you never can untie the knot—no appeal, no parliament left, to hear, to argue, or to speak for you ; and if the step you take should prove wrong, if it should unfortunately end in the nation’s calling again for her old constitution, and the politics of the British cabinet should be so desperate

as not to listen to that call, think of the dreadful consequences of which you may be the cause, if fatally the shock of arms should follow. Even to you whose conviction is clear, I would say, if the majority of your countrymen think differently from you, if even a respectable part of them only think so, do not rest so confidently on your own judgements, as to risque a measure which you cannot undo ; remember then, if the direful necessity should ever arrive to make it expedient, you may embrace it when you please, but, if once adopted, it is irrecoverable. Were I speaking in another assembly, and if in such assembly any member sat returned for a borough, where the wishes of the electors followed the voice of some one individual, by which he became to have an habitual superiority, and of course a strong interest in its preservation (I do not say such a case exists here, though it might not be unparliamentary to suppose it), I would tell him, he is a trustee, and, without positive and direct desire, he should not do an act which is to annihilate the interest he is intrusted with. No, no—let all join in cherishing the parliament—it is a good one, and has done its duty—it has proved itself competent to every purpose of legislation, to procure peace, and to put down rebellion. Refuse the measure, but refuse it with calmness and dignity. Let not the offer of it lessen your attachment or weaken your affection to Britain ; and prove that you are, and wish to be (as the duke of Portland told you that you were) “indissolubly connected with Great-Britain, one in unity of constitution and unity of interest.” But, above all, revere and steadily preserve that constitution which was confirmed to you under his administration in 1782, and which has
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given you wealth, trade, prosperity, freedom, and independence.'

Lord CASTLEREAGH, though he was willing to acknowledge the superior abilities of the Speaker, was not convinced of the impropriety of an union by the arguments or statements of that gentleman. He allowed that the adjustment of 1782 was final as to the points of grievance then brought forward; but he contended, that, with regard to other questions of intercourse, of policy, or of reciprocal benefit, it was not final in its nature, and it had been proved not to be so from its consequences. He added, that the principle of independency was a very inadequate bond of connexion, and that the two kingdoms were much more united by the feelings of the people than by the boasted settlement. Was the use of the great seal of England a sufficient tie? Would it allay the jealousy of the Irish, or destroy that distinctness of interest on which the enemies of the empire erected their hopes of dividing the islands? It was asserted that the settlement had kept the country in peace till its tranquillity was disturbed by Mr. Pitt's rashness in introducing the question of union. But this was not a just remark; for it was not a state of peace or tranquillity which that minister had endeavoured to disturb, but a state of misery and distraction to which he was ready to sacrifice his own peace in the hope of finding a remedy. Did not the Speaker and his friends, on the contrary, pursue a line of conduct more calculated to agitate and inflame the minds of the people, than to allay heats and soften animosities?—His lordship then entered into a justification of Mr. Pitt's remarks on the inconsistency of Mr. Foster's recent opinions with his former sentiments.

Commercial

Commercial details followed, in which his aim was to prove that the trade of Ireland chiefly depended on Great-Britain for its continuing to flourish, and that the benefits derived by the former country would be most effectually ensured and perpetuated by an union.

Having combated the Speaker's assertions with regard to commerce and other topics, his lordship lamented that any doubts of parliamentary competency had been started. That principle might, he said, be defined to be the right of parliament to consult in every case the welfare and happiness of the people; and no man could question it who knew or valued the constitution. The opposite doctrine was pregnant with mischief, and might, if it should be encouraged, be applied to the most seditious purposes. On the topic of religious divisions, he vindicated the jealousy which was felt by the protestants, adding, that a more liberal system of policy might be pursued after an union with full security.

Mr. GEORGE PONSONBY declared his concurrence with Mr. Foster in the opinion that the compact of 1782 had completely and definitively settled the constitutional connexion between the kingdoms. The allegation of its want of finality, and of an intention of the ministry at that time to frame new political arrangements, he considered as an idle pretence. Another pretence for an union, he said, was the growth of French principles in this kingdom; but what charms did the measure possess to banish republican sentiments and faction from the country? Had not the same principles made some progress in England and in Scotland? If union had not stopped the progress of opinion in Great-Britain, why should it be expected to have that

that operation in Ireland? A third pretence was, the probability of extinguishing or allaying religious dissension—a fourth, the better regulation of tithes; but a separate parliament might direct its wisdom to those purposes. It was also alleged that the danger of a great political difference between the parliaments rendered an incorporation adviseable; but this apprehension was excited by mere possibility, and ought to yield to fact and experience.

The true reason which induced the minister to propose the scheme was, said Mr. Ponsonby, a desire of obtaining a complete dominion over Ireland, and of drawing as much money as he could from that kingdom, that he might be enabled to continue a contest which Britain could no longer support alone. But he hoped that the spirit of the Irish would not suffer such views to prevail, and that the members of the house of commons, as they were only trustees, would not dare to surrender the rights of the people without their consent.

When the bill of regency was again discussed on the 18th of April, occasional references were made to the question of union, and strong sentiments expressed both for and against it. The majority disapproving the bill as an inadequate remedy for the evils of parliamentary variance, and as more likely to promote than check dissension, the further consideration of it was postponed to the 1st of August: in other words, it was lost for the session.

Though the ministry gained the advantage on this occasion, it was not deemed prudent to risque another discussion of the subject, while the peevishness of jealousy and the acrimony of resentment were yet unalayed. It was therefore resolved that the full developement

ment of the unpopular scheme should be deferred to the next session. The *mollia tempora fandi*, it was fondly hoped, might then occur; and a respectable majority might be induced to sanction the imperial project.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Intrigues of the Unionists—Opinions of the People on the Subject, in both Kingdoms—Account of various Proceedings, with occasional Reflexions.

FROM the time when these debates occurred to the close of the year, the history of the union may be included within a small compass. The different parties, indeed, were not idle during that interval; but their operations do not require circumstantial notice. The ministers and their friends exerted all the arts of persuasion in favor of the scheme, and endeavoured to promote it by intrigue, or enforce it by intimidation. Emissaries appeared in all parts of Ireland, recommending an union by arguments adapted to the capacities of their hearers, and preparing or encouraging petitions to parliament for the speedy accomplishment of a measure pregnant with multifarious blessings. They were sometimes mortified by incredulity, provoked by clamor, or irritated by invective; but they continued their course with confidence and spirit, and gradually augmented the number of the unionists. The opposite party labored with equal zeal, perhaps with more indefatigable diligence, for the preservation of parliamentary distinctness and the maintenance of the existing constitution.

A great part of the Hibernian community dreaded the approach of the union as that of a fiend whose baleful touch would annihilate national dignity and independence, crush the spirit of the people, blast their
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rising prosperity, and leave them at the mercy of a haughty and ungenerous neighbour. Some merely affected to view it in that odious light, while in their minds they entertained ideas favorable to its general merit and utility: these were the jacobins and malcontents, who foresaw that it would obstruct their sinister and seditious aims. Others hailed the opening prospect as that of a beneficent luminary, whose cheering rays would dispel the mists of prejudice and animosity, and, rising upon a nation long buried as it were in darkness, would diffuse the light of concord and the lustre of prosperity.

In Great-Britain the project did not excite an extraordinary degree of attention or interest. So many remarkable incidents and momentous changes had signalled the years which had succeeded the French revolution, that this great transaction seemed to be regarded, by the generality of the people, merely as a common occurrence, an ordinary act of legislation or politics. Many individuals considered it as a measure that promised little benefit, and threatened little inconvenience to either country. Such as opposed the minister from a spirit of party, rather than from motives of patriotism, vilified the scheme because he was bent on its accomplishment, and would not allow that he deserved any praise, even if the measure had been of a very beneficial tendency, for having planned or advised it; for, they said, he was not influenced on the occasion by views of liberal or enlarged policy, but, from an arbitrary and imperious disposition, sought to bring Ireland more completely under the British yoke, and, with the unfeeling rapacity of a modern financier, wished to subject her with greater facility to a regular course of parliamentary extortion. Some observers of public

lic affairs were of opinion, that considerable advantages would flow from the scheme; that it would promote the prosperity of both countries, particularly that of Ireland; that it would render the empire more defensible against a foreign enemy, as well as more secure from the machinations of domestic foes; that it would augment the resources and extend the power of the aggregate kingdom. They were not so sanguine, however, as to conclude that all its good effects would be rapid or immediate. Others, not sufficiently reflecting on the state of Ireland, imagined that her evils and miseries would quickly, if not instantly, disappear, and that her wounds, which had long rankled under unskilful treatment, would soon be healed by the judicious applications and fostering care of Great-Britain.

As we have recorded the parliamentary opinions of the statesmen and orators of both parties on this subject, it may also be expected that we should take some notice of the declared sentiments of two politicians who had seceded from parliament. One of the gentlemen to whom we allude is a distinguished commoner, whose eloquence and abilities are acknowledged even by his most rancorous opponents, but whose patriotism and political integrity are not universally or even generally allowed. The other is a peer who has acquired some philosophical and scientific reputation, who is not unskilled in finance, and is by no means a contemptible speaker, though he has been occasionally overborne by the declamatory talents of lord Grenville. He is violent in his politics, and eccentric in his character, but appears to be equal in point of honesty to any of his adversaries. It is scarcely necessary to add, that we are speaking of Mr. Fox and earl Stanhope.

The former of these politicians, at a meeting of the
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Whig club, inveighed against what he conceived to be the ministerial scheme of carrying an union into effect by military terror and martial law. This he called a monstrous proposition, which outraged every principle of honor and every feeling of humanity. Such a scheme could not produce real harmony, or lead to solid prosperity. An union, to be complete and durable, ought to be free from all constraint, not an act of power on the part of the superior state. A nominal union would not add to the strength of the empire; or, if it should hold out a prospect of such advantage, the benefit derivable from it might be more effectually obtained by a connexion which should not exclude the independence of Ireland. Mr. Burke, he added, entertained a similar opinion.

The language of earl Stanhope was, as usual, peremptory and vehement. In an address to the two nations, he stigmatised the union as 'one of the most extraordinary and unconstitutional measures that ever had been agitated in this or in any other country which had any pretence to term itself a free nation.' He said, that the measure was an insult even to those men in Ireland who had supported the ministry, and an unjust treatment of a generous and warm-hearted people. All parties in that country ought, as one man, to be averse to this 'measure of national ruin and disfranchisement, of national degradation and contempt.' To shew the danger which Ireland might incur by it, he stated the possibility of a resolution of the parliament sitting at Westminster to send a large body of foreign mercenaries to be permanently kept in garrison in that part of the empire. What means, he asked, would the Irish have to dissuade the majority from such a vote; and, if it should pass, what degree of freedom would they retain?

retain? This, we may observe, is a very improbable supposition : for the liberty of Britain would be almost equally endangered by the effects of such a vote, and a community of interest between the countries would prevent its adoption.

Regardless of the spirit of opposition, the ministers in both realms pursued their object ; and, at the prorogation of each parliament, an union was again recommended in strong terms. On the 1st of June, the viceroy of Ireland, having mentioned the address of the lords and commons of Great-Britain, declared, that his majesty would ‘ receive the greatest satisfaction in witnessing the accomplishment of a system, which, by allaying the unhappy distractions too long prevalent in Ireland, and by promoting the security, wealth, and commerce of his respective kingdoms, must afford them at all times, and especially in the present moment, the best means of jointly opposing an effectual resistance to the destructive projects of foreign and domestic enemies ;’ adding, in his own name, ‘ If I should be so fortunate as to contribute in the smallest degree to the success of this great measure, I shall think the labors and anxieties of a life devoted to the service of my country amply repaid, and shall retire with the conscious satisfaction, that I have had some share in averting from his majesty’s dominions those dangers and calamities which have overspread so large a portion of Europe.’ The active zeal evinced by the marquis in this cause precludes all doubt of the sincerity of his declarations.

On the day of this prorogation, the leaders of the anti-unionists were desirous of returning an answer to the communication from the throne ; but they were disappointed of their wish by what was termed an

‘ indecent precipitation,’ which did not allow time even for the ordinary vote of thanks to the speaker of the house of commons. The apology was, that the resolutions of the British legislature were not then proposed to the Irish parliament for immediate adoption or rejection, but with a view of preparing the two houses for a particular discussion of the subject whenever his majesty should think proper to call their attention to it,

In closing the session at Westminster on the 12th of July, the king, after expressing his joy at the comparatively tranquil state of Ireland, observed, that the ultimate security of that country could alone be established by its ‘ intimate and entire union’ with Great-Britain. ‘ The sentiments (he continued to say) manifested by numerous and respectable descriptions of my Irish subjects justify the hope that the accomplishment of this great and salutary work will be proved to be as much the joint wish, as it unquestionably is the common interest of both kingdoms.’

The Hibernian realm, at this time and during the remainder of the year, was not convulsed with rebellious commotions, nor was it in a state of perfect tranquillity. The presence of numerous troops, ready to act with decisive vigor, kept the mal-contents in awe; the vigilance of the yeomanry tended to repress disorder; and the severities of martial law, co-operating with the process of regular tribunals, diffused through the realm a salutary terror. Insults, outrages, and depredations, however, still prevailed; inveterate animosities continued to inflame the minds of the people; and the union aggravated the bitterness of contest.

Few public meetings took place during the recess of parliament, perhaps because the provincial sheriffs, more studiously than before, discountenanced such assemblies,

semblies. But the zeal of either party did not decline ; and the efforts of each were exercised in private meetings. In this race for popularity, the ministerialists were so far successful, as to procure many petitions to parliament for the accomplishment of the union. If we may believe some of the orators of opposition, the meanest artifices were practised to obtain signatures ; and the lowest of the rabble were invited to subscribe their names or affix their marks. On the other hand, the anti-unionists are accused of having had recourse to scandalous misrepresentations, and of having abused the credulity of the populace by shameless impositions. Though these mutual charges are unworthy of implicit credit, we have reason to believe that both parties were guilty of some deviations from the strictness of truth, the purity of honor, and the precision of rectitude.

No certain account have we seen of the number of petitions to parliament, or addresses to the viceroy, for or against the union ; but there is no doubt that a very considerable majority of the applicants signified a dissent from the measure. Petitions of the latter complexion would have been more numerous than they were, had not the whole influence of the court been exerted against them, particularly in a progress which the lord-lieutenant made through many counties of the realm subjected to his sway.

That the union was promoted by pecuniary grants, we cannot decisively maintain ; but, that it was forwarded by promises of favor and patronage, which constitute one species of corruption, we may affirm without the hazard of well-founded contradiction. The dread of dismission from office operated upon some minds ; and upon others the power of the army may have had an effect favorable to the views of the court,

though it does not seem to have materially checked the freedom of parliamentary debate.

While the grand scheme was approaching to maturity, the legislature of Great-Britain re-assembled on the 24th of September. His majesty then represented the experience of every day as confirming him in the persuasion, that 'signal benefit would be derived to both countries from that important measure;' and he trusted that the disposition of the parliament of Ireland would be found to correspond with that which the national council of Britain had manifested for the accomplishment of the scheme. The marquis of Buckingham, when he moved the address of thanks, observed, that, from the opportunities of accurate judgement afforded to him by a residence in Ireland at different periods, and from the very attentive consideration which he had bestowed on the subject, the probable benefits of the measure struck him in a forcible light. He was confident that the happiest effects would result from it. The people of Ireland, he said, had long thought themselves injured by the domineering influence and selfishness of Britain; but all such prejudices would be removed by an union; and a close conjunction of interests, with the prevalence of the same laws over the whole empire, would establish peace and tranquillity, contentment and happiness.

For several months subsequent to this period, no incidents connected with our subject call for particular mention. But, in proceeding to the year 1800, the exertions of the marquis of Downshire and other anti-unionists demand our notice. In the first month of that year, the marquis, the earl of Charlemont (son of the peer who commanded the volunteer army when Ireland claimed independence), and William Brabazon

Ponsonby,

Ponsonby, member for the county of Kilkenny, sent circular letters to the Irish gentry and yeomanry, to the following effect. They were authorised, they said, by a number of gentlemen of both houses, thirty-eight of whom were representatives of counties, to intimate their opinion, that petitions to parliament, declaring the real sense of the freeholders on the subject of a legislative union, would at that time be highly expedient; and, if such a proceeding should meet with the approbation of any one of the individuals to whom the letters were addressed, it was recommended to him to use his influence in procuring such a petition without delay from his county. It was reported that the same triumvirate, or some other enemies to the union, had opened an exchequer for the purposes of bribery; but of this allegation no proof appeared.

Strong invective has been lavished on the conduct of the marquis and his associates, in thus endeavouring to procure petitions: but, on a candid examination of the affair, few, except the servile advocates of all the measures of a court, will censure those gentlemen with severity. They stated their opinions without presuming to command: they merely requested those freeholders who did not approve the union to declare their sentiments in a constitutional mode to the great council of the nation.

CHAP. IX.

Debates of the Irish House of Commons in the Year 1800.

ENCOURAGED by the success of his tour, and by the efficacy of ministerial intrigues, the marquis Cornwallis prepared to meet the parliament of Ireland with confidence and alacrity. But, though the session was opened (on the 15th of January, 1800) with a full intention of renewing the recommendation of an union, no mention was made of it in his speech. The anti-unionists, however, resolved to accelerate the discussion; and, when the customary address of thanks was proposed to the commons by lord Loftus, sir LAURENCE PARSONS wished to take the sense of the house on the subject.

The reason which prevented the advocates of the measure from bringing it forward at this moment, was obvious, he said, to every member: it was only because the ministerial intrigues and machinations were not yet ripe or complete. Far from having abandoned the scheme, the court had used means which would render it, if it should be carried into effect, not an act of the parliament, but an act of despotism. ‘It matters not,’ said the baronet, ‘whether you, the representatives of this great nation, are turned out of that door by the sword of the army or the gold of the treasury—by a Cromwell or by a secretary: in either case the treason against the constitution is the same.—The minister of
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the crown is prostituting the prerogative of appointing to places in order to pack a parliament. A string of men who were against the union are to go out, that a string of men who are for it may come in. —Are we to sit supinely here until these practices are matured? Are we to wait while the serpent is collecting himself in his coils, only to spring upon us with greater violence?' He added, that the British ministers, by attempting the union at this time, evidently intended to take an unfair advantage of Ireland, 'While the spirit of the people is depressed by recent troubles—while the country is covered with armies far greater than ever were known here before—while martial law prevails, and a formidable invasion is menaced—in short, while apprehensions from without and from within preclude all free exercise of the public mind upon this fatal project—they hope to trample on the independence of Ireland.'—A season of peace, he continued, would be the most proper for the discussion of such a measure. On what pretence had the British prime minister postponed that scheme of parliamentary reform for which he was formerly so eager? Because a time of war and disturbance was not the most opportune for the introduction of a great change. Yet this very statesman was now bent on the accomplishment of a more fundamental change in the constitutions of both countries than had ever before been suggested, regardless of the unfitness of the time, thinking only of the present strength of one state and the accidental weakness of the other.

It was only in consequence of the late rebellion, say the advocates for an union, and in compassion to Ireland, as a cure for all its disorders, that the measure was proposed. But this, in the baronet's opinion, was
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a mere pretence. The idea of the scheme arose from the ambition of the British cabinet, which, regretting the cession of independence to Ireland in 1782, attempted a partial recovery of its authority three years afterwards, and, failing on that occasion, sought to recover it completely by an union; for, that such a measure was in contemplation above three years before the rebellion broke out, was evident from a letter of the duke of Portland to earl Fitzwilliam, though it was not expressly mentioned in that epistle.

The loss of what the Irish obtained in 1782 would not be the only ill consequence of an union. They would also lose what they enjoyed before that year; for their parliament itself would be annihilated, and every vestige of their constitution destroyed. To proscribe a parliament which had performed such essential services for the country, and convert the realm into a mere province of England, were acts of great injustice and tyranny: yet these would be the effects of the ministerial scheme. The obnoxious parliament might have been influenced on some occasions by faction, and at other times might have been too subservient to the court: but might not similar conduct be imputed to that of Great-Britain? It might then be argued with equal plausibility, that each legislature ought to be abolished for its delinquency.

To pretend that the parliament of Ireland was unqualified to legislate for the country, was an unfounded defamation of the national character. Such a stigma would have roused the indignant feelings of the Irish in the year 1782; and he hoped that the dignified and lofty spirit with which they were then animated had not now forsaken them, but that they would repel the calumny, and resist the arbitrary views of its authors.

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It might be said, that, though first England, and afterwards Great-Britain, had treated Ireland with illiberality and unkindness, an union would necessarily produce a change favorable to the latter. But he could not persuade himself that its commerce would ever be so safe under the control of Britain as under the care of its own parliament, or that, though it would be the interest of that country to promote the prosperity of this, greater regard or attention would be paid by the government to such part of its duty than by other states to their oppressed dependencies. Even if the articles of union should be highly beneficial to Ireland, he did not see any stronger security for a strict observance of the compact than had existed in favor of that separate parliament which the British ministers were preparing to subvert.

Ireland, he thought, would gain nothing by an union, but might lose much by it. Her loss by absentees, on a moderate computation, would be nearly doubled. The country would be more liable to disorder and convulsion from the absence of the landholders. These, when resident on their estates, might be considered as the binding-stones of society, keeping by their strength and weight all the parts of government firm and compact; but, if they should be removed, the fabric on the first storm might fall to the ground. The loss of honor and dignity might also be mentioned among the privations consequent on the scheme, and among the objections which a true Irishman would deem insurmountable.

Sir Laurence concluded his speech with the simplicity of a country gentleman rather than with the eloquence of a parliamentary orator.

‘ You want to preserve the peace of Ireland: where
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is the place to do so but in Ireland? You want to preserve the connexion of this country with England: where is the place to do so but in this country? Suppose any man of plain understanding should meet your peers and your hundred members on the road to London, and ask them, "What are you going there for?" and you should answer, "to preserve the peace of Ireland," would he not say, "Good people, go back to your own country; it is there you can best preserve its peace: England wants you not; but Ireland does."

He then moved an amendment to the address, connecting the desire of a continuance of British connexion with the wish for the preservation of an independent resident parliament.

LORD CASTLEREAGH spoke contemptuously of the arguments of sir Laurence, which, if they had any meaning at all, supported the absurd proposition, that at all times, and under every possible circumstance, a legislative union with Great-Britain would be highly disadvantageous to Ireland. That the real effect of an incorporation would be diametrically opposite to what the baronet and his friends apprehended, his lordship was confidently of opinion. The silence of the lord-lieutenant on the subject did not arise from any conviction of the impolicy of prosecuting the scheme. The question had been withdrawn, when the house of commons seemed unwilling to entertain it; but, as a great majority of the people now approved the measure, and as there was reason to believe that many of its late parliamentary opponents had renounced their ideas of its demerits; his majesty's counsellors had resolved to give it a new chance of regular investigation. The reason of its being unmentioned in the viceroy's speech was merely this—that it was to be made

made a subject of distinct communication to parliament. As the question claimed a full discussion, it ought not to be extinguished by anticipation. The respect which the house owed to the people, as well as to the king, required the investigation of a subject which involved the interests and safety of both realms. Nineteen of the most considerable counties in Ireland, constituting above five-sevenths of the kingdom, had not only expressed a wish for an examination of the offered terms, but had explicitly declared their strong desire of a legislative union. As the amendment tended to preclude such inquiry, he trusted that the good sense of the house would reject the motion.

Mr. LATOUCHE, the privy counsellor, recommended an union as the most promising remedy for the disorders of Ireland; but it was reprobated by lord COLE as a pernicious measure, promoted by improper means; and Mr. JOHN CLAUDIUS BERESFORD would only consent to it in case of the invasion and occupancy of Ireland by a French army; and even then, he said, he would insist on the restoration of the parliament, in the event of a total expulsion of the enemy.

Mr. George Ogle again declared his unwillingness to surrender the Irish constitution. Mr. Denis Browne spoke against the amendment, as did also Mr. Martin and the junior Mr. Bagwell.

Mr. FITZGERALD advised a postponement of the discussion till the agitations and troubles of the realm should subside. He called upon the friends of union to concur in the amendment, if they wished that the measure, eventually effected, should be permanent; and he called upon the anti-unionists to vote for the baronet's motion, that they might ward off the deadly blow which was meditated against the parliament of Ireland.

Ireland. He hoped that the majority of the members would not extinguish the light of the realm, as he knew not where, if they should repent, they would find 'the Promethean heat which could that light relumine.' He deprecated the loss of that constitution under which the country had risen from a low state to power and consequence, and, shaking off jealousy and discontent, had contracted a strong affection for Great-Britain. If he could persuade himself that the annihilation of the parliament was necessary to preserve the connexion with that country, and to unite both more closely in prosperity and in danger, he would swallow the draught with pleasure; however bitter and nauseous; but, as he was impressed with a contrary conviction, he felt himself bound to reject the offer, though such conduct might be injurious to his immediate personal interest. He warned the minister of the danger of persisting in the scheme. There was little reason, he said, to expect that a population of four millions, still on the increase, would respect, as sacred, a compact adjusted in the present mode. The steps pursued on the occasion would not soon be forgotten. It would be recollected that the Irish were desired to accept the proposal at a time when martial law was in full force. Future generations would hear of the year 1782, and would inquire how the great acquisition of that time—a free, resident, superintending legislature—was lost. They might be induced to re-assert that and other claims when Britain might not be in a compliant disposition; and thence might arise great discord and dangerous confusion.

Mr. O'HARA lamented the effects which the union would have in point of trade and revenue; stating, that, instead of an annual balance of 600,000*l.* in favor

favor of Ireland, there would then be a balance of 900,000*l.* against her.

Mr. GEORGE PONSONBY paid ironical compliments to lord Castlereagh for the motives which influenced him to a short postponement of discussion, and then ridiculed some strictures which that speaker had made on the dissimilar characters and principles of the anti-unionists. 'It is indeed very cruel,' he said, 'that a motley opposition should impede the wishes of the minister; it is very cruel that some who have approved and some who have opposed parliamentary reform should resist a measure which will leave them no parliament at all; it is very cruel that those who have submitted plans of emancipation to traitors should agree in opposing a² union; it is a most sad and deplorable thing, that those who may have differed in speculative improvement of the constitution should agree in reprobating its total destruction; and still more sad, because the very circumstance of a motley opposition shows, that the smallest presumption in favor of an union cannot be deduced from it.—How ingeniously and logically the noble lord argues! "A legislative union, gentlemen, is a most excellent thing, for yonder stands a man who has supported parliamentary reform; an union is an excellent thing, for yonder is a man who proposed to divide the country into French departments; this union is a most powerful remedy for all your evils, for yonder sits an honorable gentleman who would have emancipated the catholics of Ireland!" These, it must be allowed, are very conclusive arguments why you should relinquish that parliament which alone can secure the liberties of the people!'

The minister affected to apprehend, that, if the parliament should not be destroyed, a set of innovators

might take an opportunity of bringing forward democratic plans of reform. Mr. Ponsonby said, he could not satisfactorily divine what the future state of Ireland might be. 'I will not look into the regions of futurity for remote, shadowy, and possible evils, but I will look at the calamitous and terrible evil with which our country is now threatened, and I will tell the noble lord that the accumulation of ages and the extensive range of possibility cannot furnish a more heavy affliction or a more complete and irreparable destruction to this country than his plan of union. He advises you to knock your aged parliament on the head, lest it should be at any time influenced by a doting affection towards the people of Ireland—to destroy your representation altogether, lest it should undergo any change in favor of the catholic claims—to destroy the parliament because it affords an opportunity to evil-minded men to execute mischief under cover of the freedom of debate !'

To say that a parliament should no longer exist because some of its members had not acted with continued prudence and consummate wisdom, would be as unreasonable as to say to a man who had acted with indiscretion, that he should cease to live. Did any man, because the commons had voted the abolition of the monarchy and the house of peers, propose at the Restoration that the representatives of the people should no longer form a part of the legislature? When James II. had lost his crown by the abuse of his prerogative, did it occur to the wildest man in the parliament of England to propose the extinction of the monarchical part of the constitution? Government ought to endeavour to make the parliament wiser and better, not to seek its destruction on pretence of its errors or misfortunes.

misfortunes. But, notwithstanding all its efforts, ‘ I firmly believe (said the eloquent barrister) that the gentlemen of this house will never consent to yield themselves up to the minister. I am satisfied that the people of Ireland will never consent to the annihilation of their parliament.—If ever this assembly should consent to its own immolation—if ever the members of the Irish house of commons should assent to an act for turning themselves out of doors—hope shall not quit me, until the last man shall have passed the door which the minister would close upon our liberties. When they shall approach that door, if they but cast a look behind—if they but view that chair, where integrity now sits enthroned—if their eyes but linger on that floor, where patriot eloquence has been poured forth for their country—if they but recollect the struggles of honorable legislation which these walls have witnessed—they will stop before they take the last irretrievable step; they will cling to this house, the temple of their honor, and will say to the minister, “ You have taken an unjust advantage of our confidence, to desire us to ruin our country; you have taken a most ungenerous advantage of the state of that country, to seduce its parliament to annihilate itself and the liberties of its constituents; but we will show you that you have deceived yourself in the calculation of our baseness—we will show you that we represent an honest, brave, and generous people, and are worthy to represent them—we will not flatter, but we will serve them, and establish an eternal claim to their gratitude and to the gratitude of posterity.” This I will suppose to be the influence of feeling, the triumph of nature and of honor; and, until I shall see the last man out of these doors, and they shall be shut upon him

for ever, I will not believe that those who have lived with such honor will die with such disgrace.'

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL entered into a history of the progress of faction in Ireland, and amused himself with invectives against the leaders of opposition, rather than with an argumentative or declamatory recommendation of an union.

Mr. BUSHE censured the last speaker for his endeavours to identify anti-unionism with disaffection to the sovereign. He then animadverted on that mixture of presumption and meanness which appeared in the conduct of the secretary, who avowed in his own harangue an intention of renewing his attack on the constitution, which he had forborne to state in the speech prepared for the vice-roy. He condemned the ministerial appeals from the parliament to the rabble, and the studious exercise of undue influence to control the freedom of the legislature. He execrated the proposal of union as a revival of the odious and absurd title of conquest, a denial of the rights of nature to a deserving people, an insult to the dignity and an invasion of the independence of a respectable kingdom. He cautioned the ministry against propounding the dangerous doctrine of the incompatibility of British connexion with Hibernian independence—a doctrine which would paralyse the loyalty of the Irish, and shake the first and best principles of politics in the island to their foundations. He exposed the injustice with which Ireland had long been treated by Great-Britain, and affirmed that all the concessions of the latter had been wrung from her like drops of her heart's blood. He could not hear without indignation of the proposed surrender of a separate parliament, which had procured for its country the greatest advantages, to the
yoke

yoke of a nation which had systematically oppressed that country. He could not think without horror of the provincial despotism which would succeed the present government of Ireland; and he exhorted Britain to beware of the formidable precedent of uncontrolled power holding five millions of people in chains. He ridiculed the various pretences for the measure, as ill-founded and absurd; asserted the full sufficiency and superior qualifications of the Irish parliament for every purpose of just and equitable government; and concluded a course of animated declamation with an appeal to the spirit of 1782 and to the protecting care of Providence for the preservation of his country.

When Mr. Prendergast had spoken in favor of an union, Mr. J. M. O'DONEL declared that he opposed it because he considered it as ruinous and disgraceful, because he knew the foul means which had been practised to carry it into effect, and because he did not conceive that the parliament had a right to sacrifice the constitution of the country*.

Mr. OSBORNE represented the inefficacy of the settlement of 1782, and the risque of separation, as strong grounds for a legislative union; and he therefore hoped that the house, instead of agreeing to the amendment, would candidly and patiently discuss the grand question.

After a speech from Mr. Hardy against the union, Mr. ARTHUR MOORE, with a greater display of eloquence, harangued the house on the same side. He condemned the ministerial practices of corruption and intimidation, the 'wicked and unconstitutional means' to which the government had resorted, 'in

* This anti-unionist was lately (Sept. 24, 1801) killed in a duel with Mr. Denis Bingham, whose opponent in a parliamentary election he engaged to support.

order to impose upon the country, destroy the parliament, and overturn the constitution.' He proceeded to state, in the following terms, his opinion of the inadequacy of the measure to its specified objects. 'Will such a nation as this be contented without a resident parliament, without a just representation in the united senate, without its liberty—with increased burthens, and decreased ability to bear them—with diminished population, and amplified sources of discontent—with a deserted capital and an uninhabited country? Will this order of things bring us internal quiet? Yes—the quiet of enforced submission, the repose of slavery, the tranquillity of death, the peace of the grave.'—He added, that the scheme would be destructive of that constitution which is the birth-right of the Irish people, subversive of that popular balance of the English government which is the security of British liberty; that it would 'destroy one parliament, but to corrupt the other;' that Ireland 'would be governed by the sword, and England would become the victim of her own usurpation.'—He concluded with a violent *tirade*, which, in the cool moments of reflexion, might appear even to himself absurdly hyperbolic. 'If the measure should be carried under all the circumstances which I have stated, it will be a robbery, and not a treaty—an act of constraint and violence, not of compact and volition—a conquest, not an union. An union formed upon such principles, and accomplished by such means, policy never can require, justice never can sanctify, wisdom never can approve, patriotism never can reconcile, time never can cement, and force never can establish. It may be an union for a few days, a few months, perhaps for a few years; but it will be followed by ages of ill blood, generations of hostility, centuries of contest and desolation, and misery

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to this island to all eternity. It will be an union founded on the violation of public faith, erected on national degradation, equally subversive of the moral, physical, and political fitness of things, and equally odious and abominable in the sight of God and man.'

Sir JOHN PARNELL said, that he would support the amendment for the purpose of preventing those disturbances and that separation from Great-Britain which some of the courtiers had accused the anti-unionists of promoting. He considered the settlement of 1782 as finally obligatory, both in point of policy and good faith; and he trusted to the spirit of the house, and to the justice of Britain, for the abandonment of a scheme which threatened injury or ruin to the prosperity, the connexion, and the constitutions of the two countries.

Sir JOHN BLAQUIERE seemed disposed to recommend an union chiefly for the convenience of Great-Britain, which was now obliged, by the distractions and divisions of Ireland, to employ, for the internal safety of the sister realm, a force that might be more beneficially used in support of the general interests of the empire.

Dr. BROWNE spoke indecisively on the subject, though he was more inclined to an union than he had been in the preceding session, because he thought it more necessary.

Mr. PLUNKET represented the wealth, power, and dignity of Britain, as irresistible arguments against an union; for, if that country had become great, prosperous, and happy, by a free constitution, and by the protection of a domestic superintending parliament, Ireland, being in possession of the same advantages, had the means of flourishing without an incorporation with the neighbouring realm. He deemed the example

of Britain, in this respect, more persuasive and more disinterested than her advice. He preferred the existing alliance between the kingdoms—connected as they were by the unity of the executive power, identity of interest, and similarity of constitution—to the unnecessary consolidation of the two legislatures. He spoke of the compact of 1782 as precluding the present offer; opposed the violation of it as an act of gross perfidy; and put this question to the British government; ‘If that treaty is not binding on you whilst we are alive and strong and able to support our mutual pretensions, will this treaty of 1800 be binding when we are extinct by the terms of it, and you alone survive to expound and to enforce it?’ He traced the proceedings of the government from the first mention of the scheme, lavishing his censures both upon the measure and the means; and earnestly exhorted the ministry not to ‘offer violence to the settled principles or shake the settled loyalty of the country.’

The PRIME SERJEANT took notice of the arts which had been practised by the ‘anti-union faction,’ to delude and inflame the people. He accused the leaders of that party of having resorted to the usual auxiliaries of a bad cause—virulence, misrepresentation, clamor, and sedition. He then appealed to the well-meaning and ‘highly-respectable gentlemen who had opposed the union from a sincere opinion of its impolicy,’ whether it was just or candid to co-operate with the faction in preventing a cool discussion of the measure. As a great proportion of the kingdom had declared in its favor, he thought it the duty of the representatives of the people to give it a fair investigation.

Mr. BARRINGTON, by serious reflexion, was confirmed

firmed in his opinion that a revolutionary measure arising from the ashes of a rebellion, and grounded on the distractions of a nation, could not be permanent; and he dreaded the ultimate loss of British connexion from the pertinacity of those ministers who wished to deprive Ireland of her independence. Great-Britain, he said, had nothing to bestow, which could compensate the advantages of an independent constitution and of a resident legislature.

Sir JOHN MACARTNEY contrasted the studious attention of the Irish to the improvement of their country with the negligence of the British government in the cultivation of its own territory. Hence he inferred that, after an union, less regard would be paid to Ireland in point of internal benefit, than it now received from a resident and enlightened parliament. If the Irish were willing to be entirely governed by a legislature in which they would not form one sixth part of the representation, by a country of about twice their population, having more than twenty-three times their debt, he would not presume to resist the political change which the court so earnestly wished to effect; but, said he, 'until their sense be fairly and honestly taken and expressed in its favor, I shall think myself fully warranted in resisting it at every step.'

Mr. LUKE FOX strongly contended that the agreement of 1782 was not final, and that the constitution, as then regulated, had not the seeds of permanence, but was liable to great abuses and to the constant risque of a separation of the realms. He therefore condemned the amendment as impolitic and dangerous, to which, on the other hand, Mr. EGAN gave his cordial support.

The next speech being that of the celebrated Mr.

GRATTAN,

GRATTAN, our readers will expect a detailed report of it. Not only those who have formed a high opinion of the ability and patriotism of that gentleman, but such as think him a voluble declaimer rather than a masterly orator, and a factious demagogue rather than a true friend of his country, will wish to have more than a mere summary of the sentiments which he expressed on the agitation of this memorable question.

He began with a reference to the adjustment of the year 1782. This settlement, he said, consisted of several parts, establishing the claim of the Irish to have no other legislature than that of their own country, and imposing a finality on all constitutional projects between them and the English. The British parliament voted the repeal of the act of the sixth year of George I. and proposed a solid and permanent connexion; but, as the Irish legislature, content with the former of these votes, rejected the latter, the English acquiesced, and the adjustment was considered as final. He quoted some passages from the parliamentary resolutions and addresses, and from the ministerial declarations, to support his assertion, which, however, he did not satisfactorily confirm.

After his quotations, he said, 'I think I have now shown, that the argument of the minister (who asserted that the adjustment was not intended to be final) is against the express letter, the evident meaning, and honest sense of this definitive settlement; and I repeat, that finality was not only a part of the settlement, but one of its principal objects. The case is still stronger against him: finality was the principal object of his country, as legislative independency was the object of ours. Ireland wished to seize the moment of her strength for the establishment of her liberties; the court

court of England wished to conclude the operations of that strength, and bound its progress: the one country wished to establish her liberty, the other to check the growth of demand—I say the growth of demand, it was the expression of the time; the court of England came therefore to an agreement with this country, *viz.* to establish for ever a free and independent existence of the Irish parliament, and to preserve for ever the unity of the British empire—the former, by the above-mentioned adjustment, the latter, by annexing a clause of finality to that adjustment, and by precluding the introduction of any constitutional questions in either country affecting the connexion, which was to rest under solemn covenant, impregnable and invincible by the intrigue or ambition of either, founded on the prudent, the profound, the liberal, and the eternal principle of unity of empire and separation of parliament.

‘ I might, however, wave all this, and yet the minister would get nothing by it. I might allow, in contradiction to common sense, that final adjustment, as proposed by his majesty, means incipient negotiation—I will suppose, in contradiction to truth, to public faith, public honor, and common policy, that the councils of Great-Britain at that time meant to leave the Irish constitution open to the encroachments of the British parliament and the British empire, open to the encroachments of the Irish volunteer; that is, that she meant to expose the solidity of her empire, in order to cheat the Irish, first of their opportunity, and afterwards of their constitution; and yet he has gained nothing by these preposterous concessions, because he must allow, that the arrangement did proceed to certain articles of covenant, and the first article on the part of
England

England excludes his union, being the assent of the parliament of Great-Britain to the requisition of the people of Ireland, which was, to be exempted in all future times from the interference of British parliaments, and to have established over them no other legislature than that of king, lords, and commons of Ireland. If we admit, then, the ridiculous idea of ulterior measures to follow final adjustment, an union could not be one of them. It is hardly necessary to mention, that he has been minister ever since that period; that during the whole time he never ventured to name an union as one of those further measures—not in 1783, when a bill was brought in by the ministry—not in 1785, when he introduced his celebrated propositions—not in the administration of 1785—in short, not until he had reduced this country, by a train of calamitous measures and religious divisions, to the condition of a conquest, such as she was when the parliament of England, at the close of the last century, took away her trade, and in the middle of the present took away her constitution. The minister proceeds: he impeaches the constitution of 1782: from disavowing an arrangement so adjusted at that time, and an adjustment so concluded, he advances, and calls that adjustment a miserable imperfection after fifteen-years' panegyric. When he has a great army in Ireland, he has made that discovery; and, instead of a constitution which established peace in Ireland, he revives a principle which produced war in America—namely, that two independent legislatures are incompatible. This was the language of lord North's sword in the colonies; this is the language of Mr. Pitt's sword in Ireland; and the doctrine of an imperial legislature, by which Great-Britain lost America, and which Britain surrendered

dered to Ireland, takes once more its bloody station in the pages of the minister, in defiance of faith, and in contempt of experience.—“ You abolished,” he says, “ one constitution ; but you forgot to form another.” Indeed !—What ! does he mean that we should have demolished an usurpation in order to mangle a constitution ? Does he mean that we should have overset the tyranny of one parliament to mangle another ? In short, does he mean that we should have taken away the usurped and tyrannical powers of the English legislature, in order to restore those powers to that very legislature ? In what branches ? His propositions have stated them ; commerce, &c. the very branches in which the power of that legislature had been most oppressively abused. Certainly the conductors of that settlement, on the part of Ireland, did not think proper so to restore the grievance of a foreign legislature, and so to limit the powers of a domestic one. The minister has given in his speech the reason—“ All the great branches of trade (by which he must mean the linen trade, the plantation and the import trade) are to be ascribed to the liberality of England, not to covenant.”—I deny it : but, as ministers may deny covenants, it seemed prudent to reserve the powers of parliament ; and accordingly the Irish legislature retains full and ample resources, under the settlement of that time, to incline England to remember and observe her compacts with our country, should the British minister be disposed to forget them. Thus the parliament of Ireland can so regulate her intercourse with other countries for colonial produce, so regulate her right to an East-India trade, and so adjust the duties imposed on her channel trade, as to secure a preference in the English market to her linens, and to secure a
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direct intercourse with the British plantations. Was Ireland to retain those powers with a view to annoy? No; but she was to retain them, lest Great-Britain, instigated by some minister, might be induced to exercise once more those powers of annoyance with which now the right honorable gentleman threatens Ireland; in short, lest Britain should retain all her powers of molestation, and Ireland should surrender all her powers of retaliation. The classic minister must know—Tacitus has told him—that between the powerful and the impotent there can be no peace: the powers of which I speak were powers of peace—they were powers of protection—they were the great reserves of the Irish parliament to secure the trade of Ireland and harmony of empire. The wisdom of the reserve such a minister as he is was born to establish. Strange ideas this minister entertains of the constitution of an Irish parliament! It should be incompetent—it should be omnipotent; it should be incompetent to regulate the commerce of the country—omnipotent to overturn her constitution: it should be inadequate and all-mighty—inadequate to protect, all-mighty to save the people; its divine powers are to arise from its obsequiousness, and the act of its surrender with him constitutes its omnipotence.

‘ The minister specifies his objections to this settlement of 1782. The regency is one, and war another: facts are against him in both. He states, that accident alone (meaning the recovery of his majesty) preserved the identity of the executive power at the time of the regency. He totally mis-states that point. It was not accident, *viz.* the recovery of the king, that preserved the identity of the executive power: that identity was preserved

preserved amply, carefully, and affectionately, by the determination of the Irish parliament in choosing for the regent the heir apparent of the crown, already designated and determined upon, though not in form invested by the parliament of Great-Britain. The principle that came under the consideration of our parliament was three-fold—the principle of monarchy, the principle of connexion, the principle of party. With regard to the two first, they concurred with the parliament of England; they chose as regent the next in succession to the crown, not choosing him before the parliament of Great-Britain had signified a determination to appoint him; and, in so doing, *they* followed faithfully the spirit of the act of annexation of the crown, which forms between the two countries their bond and connexion, but a bond and connexion through the medium of monarchy. With respect to the third principle they differed, the parliament of England thinking proper to encumber the regent with extraordinary limitations, and that of Ireland judging it more eligible to leave him in full exercise of all the executive powers.’

In short, Mr. Grattan added, the Irish parliament did not think it proper to appoint a regent with less than regential power, and to invest a minister, in opposition to him, with a great portion of regal authority. Hence, perhaps, originated the scheme of union; hence perhaps the ‘visitation of calamitous government which had befallen Ireland ever since.’ One of the minister’s instruments had confessed it; he had said that all the misfortunes of this country sprang from that resentful period. But to reproach the Irish with the crime of taking advantage of the king’s illness, ill became that minister who had
announced

announced the opportunity in the broadest and most unqualified resolution, who assured the parliaments of both countries that they had a right to supply at their discretion the deficiency in the executive magistrate—in other words, that each might establish a temporary republic. To decline the opportunity was called the ambition of the Hibernian parliament; to proclaim the opportunity was termed the moderation of the minister. His partisan in Ireland had gone farther: he had maintained the power of the British legislature to bind the sister kingdom.

— Ille impiger hausit

Spumantem pateram, et pleno se proluat auro.

According to the two opinions, the two houses of the British parliament could overturn the British monarchy and the Irish constitution.

In the minister's second instance, that of war, the fact (continued the speaker) was against him. The parliament of Ireland, ever since its emancipation, had concurred with that of Britain on the subject of war, with this remarkable difference, that its concurrence was barren before that event, ²¹ and productive after it. It had repeatedly, after emancipation, voted money for British seamen, proving how much more beneficial were the offerings of liberty than the squeezings and the eviscerations of power: but fact and bounty made no impression upon the premier, who, without reflecting how deeply Ireland must be interested in British welfare, and how improbable must be the dissent of the former realm on the subject of war, would force her to a concurrence by depriving her of her independent legislature. In one instance, indeed, it would have been fortunate for Britain, happy for his majesty, if
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the Irish parliament had not cursed him with her concurrence. The American war was the event to which he alluded.

‘ In this part of his argument the minister is weak ; and in his remedy he is not only weak, but mischievous. He proposes, by taking away our powers of dissent, to withdraw our motive of concurrence ; and, to secure our silence, forfeits our affection. He foresees an improbable event : of that event he greatly exaggerates the danger, and provides a remedy which makes that danger not only imminent but deadly.

‘ I will put a question to my country. I will suppose her at the bar, and I will then ask, Will you fight for an union as you would for a constitution ? Will you fight for those lords and commons, who, in the last century, took away your trade, and in the present your constitution, as for that king, lords, and commons, who restored both ?

‘ Well, the minister has destroyed this constitution. To destroy is easy. The edifices of the mind, like the fabrics of marble, require an age to build, but ask only minutes to precipitate ; and, as the fall is of no time, it is the effect of any strength. A common laborer and a pick-axe, a little lawyer, a little pandar, and a wicked minister—so perish the works of men !

‘ That constitution, which with more or less violence has been the inheritance of this country for six hundred years—that *modus tenendi parliamentum*, which lasted and out-lasting of Plantagenet the wars, of Tudor the violence, and of Stuart the systematic falsehood—even the bond and condition of our connexion—are now the objects of ministerial attack. The constitution which he destroys is one of the pillars of British empire ; dear in its violation,

lation, dear in its recovery. Its restoration cost Ireland her noblest efforts ; it was the habitation of her loyalty, as well as of her liberty, where she had hung up the sword of the volunteer ; her temple of fame, as well as of freedom, where she had seated herself, as she vainly thought, in modest security and in a long repose.

‘ I have done with the pile which the minister batters—I come to the Babel which he builds—and, as he throws down without a principle, so does he construct without a foundation. This fabric he calls an union ; and to this his fabric there are two striking objections. First, it is no union—it is not an identification of people, for it excludes the catholics ; 2dly, It is a consolidation of the legislatures ; that is to say, it merges the Irish parliament, and incurs every objection to an union, without obtaining the only object which an union professes : it is an extinction of the constitution, and an exclusion of the people. I say, he excludes the catholics for ever, and for the very reason which he and his advocates hold out as the ground of expectation—that hereafter, in a course of time (he does not say when), if they behave themselves (he does not say how), they may see their case submitted to a course of discussion (he does not say with what result or determination) ; and, as the ground for this inane period, in which he promises nothing, in which he can promise nothing, and in which, if he did promise much, he would at so remote a period be able to perform nothing, unless he, like the evil he has accomplished, be immortal ;—for this inane sentence, in which he can scarcely be said to deceive the catholic, or suffer the catholic to deceive himself, he exhibits no other ground than the physical inanity of the

the catholic body accomplished by an union, which, as it destroys the relative importance of Ireland, destroys also the relative proportion of its catholic inhabitants, who thus become admissible, because they cease to be any thing. Hence, according to him, their brilliant expectation ; “ you were,” say his advocates, and so imports his argument, “ before the union, as three to one—you will be by the union as one to four.”—Thus he founds their hopes of political power on the extinction of physical consequence, and makes the inanity of their body and the non-entity of their country the pillars of their future ambition. Let me add, that even if catholics should be admitted into parliament by the articles of union, it would be of little avail to the body. What signifies it to the body, whether a catholic individual be an insignificant unit in the English parliament or in the street ; in either case, he would be nothing—he would belong to nothing—he would have nothing to which he could belong—no country—no Irish people—no Irish nation.’

Mr. Grattan afterwards observed, that the minister, by his first plan, as detailed by his advocates, not only excluded the catholics from parliament, but also deprived the protestants of a due representation in that assembly ; that he struck off one half of the representatives of counties, and preserved the proportion of boroughs as two to one ; thus dismissing for ever the questions of catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform : that, instead of reforming abuses in church and state, he wished to entail them on posterity ; that, in lieu of protestant ascendancy and catholic participation, he proposed to ‘ constitute borough ascendancy in perpetual abuse and dominion ;’ that it was his aim to reform the British parliament by nearly sixty borough

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members,

members, and that of Ireland by five hundred and fifty-eight English and Scotch members, and thus, by mutual misrepresentation, frame an imperial legislature. That this plan was in part abandoned, Mr. Grattan was pleased to hear ; for it was ‘ too desperate,’ he said, as far as it related to the proportion of counties and boroughs ;’ for, whether the new representatives should be in a greater or less proportion borough members, they would be the ‘ host of administration, not the representatives of the people.’

Of the predicament in which the new members would be placed, he said, ‘ Never was there a situation in which men would have so much temptation to act ill, and so little to act well. Subject to great expence and consequent distresses, having no support from the voice of an Irish public, no check, they will be in situation a sort of gentlemen of the empire, that is to say, gentlemen at large, unowned by one country, and unelected by the other, suspended between both, false to both, and belonging to neither. The sagacious British secretary of state has remarked, “ How great will be the advantage to the talents of Ireland, to have this opportunity in the British empire thus opened !” That is what we dread ;—that the market of St. Stephen will be opened to the individual, and the talents of the country, like its property, draughted from the kingdom of Ireland to be sold in London. These men, from their situation (man is the child of situation), though their native honor may struggle, will be adventurers of a most expensive kind, adventurers with pretensions, dressed and sold, as it were, in the shrouds and grave-clothes of the Irish parliament, and playing for hire their tricks on her tomb, the only repository the minister will allow to an Irish constitution—the images of degradation

gradation and the representatives of nothing. Come—he has done much : he has destroyed one constitution, he has corrupted another ; and this corrupted constitution he calls a parental parliament.

‘ I congratulate the country on the new baptism of what was once called the representative body of the nation ; instead of the plain august language of constitution, we are here saluted with the novel and barbaric phraseology of empire. With this change of name, we perceive a transfer of obligation, converting the duty of the delegate into the duty of the constituent, and the inheritance of the people into the inheritance of their trustees.

‘ There is not in this plan any one profound, comprehensive, or exalted conception. Of this assembly, this imperial parliament, what are the elements ? Irish absentees who have forsaken their country, and a British parliament that took away the constitution. Does the minister say that such a parliament will have no prejudices against Ireland ? We are taught to believe, that he has a capital understanding, a comprehensive knowledge, and a transcendent eloquence :—hear him with all these powers speak on the subject of Ireland, whether it be the conduct of her administration, the character of her people, her commerce, her covenants, or her constitution, and he betrays an ignorance that would dishonor an idiot.’

Some desultory observations followed ; and the speaker then noticed the bribes offered by Mr. Pitt. To the protestant church perpetual security was promised ; but a measure that would annihilate the parliament by which the church was upholden, and disfranchise the people who supported that establishment, would rather tend, he said, to its disgrace and ruin.

To the catholic clergy salaries were promised. Those who had been strongly accused of disloyalty were to be rewarded for imputed treasons against the king, if they would commit real treasons against the people. Salaries, he allowed, might reasonably be given to those sectaries for the exercise of religious duty; but he could not approve the grant of wages for political apostasy. According to this plan, the catholic religion would seem to disqualify its followers from receiving the blessings of the constitution, while their hostility to that constitution qualified them to receive a salary for the exercise of their religion, which would thus be at once punished by civil disability and encouraged by ecclesiastical provision: as good catholics they would be disqualified; and, as bad citizens, would be rewarded.

A commutation of tithes formed another bribe. It had formerly been observed by some of the king's ministers, in opposition to a proposal of that kind from Mr. Grattan, that it would tend to the overthrow of the church; but now, he said, the premier was not unwilling to overturn the church, if he could at the same time overturn the constitution.

Bribes were also offered to the mercantile body. Commercial benefits were holden out for political annihilation; and an abundance of capital was promised; but, first, a great part of the landed capital of the country would be taken away by the necessary operation of an union. This rival being removed, commercial capital, it was supposed, would quickly take its place. But these and other promises of the minister would probably be found visionary. 'He goes on (says the bold orator) asserting with great ease to himself, and without any obligation to fact, upon the subject.

Icarian

Icarian imagination is the region in which he delights to sport. Where he is to take away your parliament—where he is to take away your first judicature—where he is to take away your money—where he is to increase your taxes—where he is to get an Irish tribute; there he is a plain direct matter-of-fact man; but where he is to pay you for all this—there he is poetic and prophetic; no longer a third-hand financier, but an inspired accomptant. Fancy gives him her wand; Amalthea takes him by the hand; Ceres is in his train. The English capitalist, he thinks, will settle his family in the midst of those Irish catholics whom he does not think it safe to admit into parliament; as subjects, he thinks them dangerous; as a neighbouring multitude, safe. The English manufacturer will make this distinction: he will dread them as individuals, but will confide in them as a body, and settle his family and his property in the midst of them; he will, therefore, the minister supposes, leave his mines, leave his machinery, leave his comforts, leave his habits, conquer his prejudices, and come over to Ireland to meet his taxes and miss his constitution. The manufacturers did not do this when the taxes of Ireland were few, or when there was no military government in Ireland: however, as prejudices against the country increase, he supposes that commercial confidence may increase likewise. There is no contradicting all this, because arguments which reason does not suggest reason cannot remove. Besides, the minister in all this does not argue, but foretell—now you cannot answer a prophet, you can only disbelieve him; his arguments are false, but his inspirations may be true. Appearances, however, are against them. For instance, a principal ground of complaint in Ireland is a misapplication of landed capital,

pital, or the diversion of it to foreign countries from the cultivation of Ireland, where great tracts remain either totally neglected or superficially improved, where the tenantry have not capital, and the land can be reclaimed only by the employment (and a very rational employment it would be) of part of the rent arising from it, on the soil which produced it. A gradual improvement, however, has taken place in this respect since the establishment of our free constitution, which contains in itself the power of checking the evil I speak of, and which, by adding to the consequence of the country, will naturally diminish the number of absentees, aided as it must be by the growth of English taxes, unless by an union we adopt those taxes in Ireland. How does the premier remedy this disorder? He finds a great absentee draught; he gives you another; and, having secured to you two complaints, he engages to cure both. Among the principal causes of complaint we may reckon another effect arising from the non-residence of the Irish landlords, whose presence on their own estates is necessary for the succour, as well as the improvement of their tenantry; that the peasants may not perish for want of medicine, of cordial, or of cure, which they can only find in the administration of the landlord, who civilises them, and regulates them in the capacity of a magistrate, while he covers them and husbands them in that of a protector, improving not only them but himself by the exercise of his virtues, as well as by the dispensation of his property, drawing together the two orders of society, the rich and the poor, until each may administer to the other, and civilise, the one by giving, and the other by receiving; so that aristocracy and democracy may have a head and a body; so that the rich may bring

bring on the poor, and the poor may support the rich and both contributing to the strength, order, and beauty of the state, may form that pillar of society where all below is strength, and all above is grace. How does the minister's plan accomplish this? He withdraws the landed gentlemen, and then improves Irish manners by English factors.'

Proceeding to the topic of menace, Mr. Grattan remarked, that, as Mr. Pitt before offered a trade which he had not to give, he had since threatened to withdraw a trade which he could not take away. The threat was founded on a 'monstrous assertion,' that the principal branches of Irish commerce were due to the liberality of Great-Britain. That England had ever been liberal to Ireland, the speaker denied, though he admitted that she had been sometimes just and faithful. Whatever advantages had accrued to the Irish, had been obtained by their parliament and the resources of their country; and they might be kept by the same means, in defiance of menaces, which might be answered by such threats as would affect the naval and commercial interests of Great-Britain.

From these discussions he reverted to the general question. 'The minister (he said) proposes to you to give up the ancient inheritance of your country, to proclaim an utter and blank incapacity to make laws for your own people, and to register this proclamation in an act which inflicts on this ancient nation an eternal disability; and he accompanies these monstrous proposals by undisguised terror and unqualified bribery; and this he calls no attack on the honor and dignity of the kingdom. The thing which he proposes to buy is what cannot be sold—liberty. For it he has nothing
to

give. Every thing of value which you possess you obtained under a free constitution: if you resign this, you must not only be slaves but idiots. His propositions are built upon nothing but your dishonor. He tells you—it is his main argument—that you are unfit to exercise a free constitution; and he affects to prove it by the experiment. Jacobinism grows, he says, out of the very state and condition of Ireland. I have heard of parliament impeaching ministers; but here is a minister impeaching parliament. He does more; he impeaches the parliamentary constitution itself. The abuses in that constitution he has protected; it is only its existence that he destroys—on what ground? Your exports since your emancipation, under that constitution, and in a great measure by it, have been nearly doubled; commercially therefore it has worked well. Your concord with England since the emancipation, as far as it relates to parliament, on the subject of war, has been not only approved, but has been productive; imperially, therefore, it has worked well. To what then does the minister in fact object?—that you have supported him, that you have concurred in his system: therefore he proposes to the people to abolish the parliament and to continue the minister. He does more; he proposes to you to substitute the British parliament in your place, to destroy the body that restored your liberties, and restore that body which destroyed them. Against such a proposition, were I expiring on the floor, I should beg to utter my last breath, and to record my dying testimony.'

Mr. CORRY could not avoid taking notice of Mr. Grattan's 'extraordinary speech.' He intimated to him, that the history of his own exploits, which chiefly composed his account of the constitution of 1782, was totally

totally unnecessary, as that settlement had not been impugned by any member of the house, being universally deemed final and conclusive with regard to its particular object, *viz.* the assertion of the right of the Irish nation to refuse obedience to the acts of the British legislature, in which the former community was not represented. The extension of its finality, however, to a perpetual preclusion of all power of the parliament of Ireland to apply the circumstances arising from new situations to the future advantage of the country, was extremely absurd.—In answer to the observations of the last speaker on the regency and other alleged points of parliamentary difference, he maintained the risque of a variance which might lead to separation. He even supported his side of the question by referring to what Mr. Grattan had admitted in speaking of the principle of party—namely, that the two legislatures might practically differ from each other. Hence it was evident, said the chancellor of the exchequer, that the boasted compact was not a sufficient bond of connexion. In the case of war or of peace, the inadequacy of the constitution also appeared; for the power of refusal in the Irish to concur with the British parliament was sufficient at any time to destroy the co-operation, and consequently to loosen the connexion and impair or subvert the security of the empire. The inferiority of the Irish constitution, he thought, must be obvious to Mr. Grattan, in the want of that power of controlling the exercise of the royal prerogative in questions of peace and war, which the British lords and commons possessed. Where, he might ask, was the control of the Hibernian parliament over the British minister advising the king to declare war, when even with respect to the minister in Ireland the power of that body ‘was
totally

totally inoperative over what the honorable gentleman himself had so often expressively termed the fugacious responsibility of those who could elude the grasp of parliament, and scoff at its authority by stepping on board of the packet ?'

Mr. Grattan's assertion, that the liberties of Ireland were those which were settled at the convention of Dungannon, ratified at the provincial meetings, and finally registered by parliament, drew from Mr. Corry such censures as might have been expected from a minister of the crown, replying to an advocate of the sovereignty of the people. The strictures on the treatment of the catholics, on the bribes offered to various descriptions of men, and on the fallacy of the hopes thus excited, were likewise productive of strong animadversion from this courtly speaker, by whom French principles in their worst sense were freely imputed to the warm opposer of the ministry.

The idea that the parliament of Ireland would be annihilated by an union was also reprobated by Mr. Corry, as absurd and delusive. The three estates, he said, would continue to legislate for that country—namely, 'the king, the lords of Ireland, by a number elected by and from themselves, and the commons representing the people, chosen by themselves.' Whatever might be the proportion of numbers, the Hibernian parliament would merely be blended with another set of men constituting the British parliament.

A division followed this long course of debate, about ten o'clock in the morning. The votes for the amendment did not exceed 96, while 138 appeared for the unaltered address. This superiority of number was highly pleasing to the court; and the viceroy hoped to increase it by allowing an interval of some weeks to

pass

pass before he sent to either house a copy of the resolutions of the parliament of Great-Britain.

On the 5th of February, a message from the lord-lieutenant was delivered to each assembly, intimating the king's desire that the resolutions should be submitted to the attentive consideration of the Hibernian legislature, and expressing his hope that the great object to which they related might be matured and completed by the wisdom of the two parliaments and the loyal concurrence of the people. Lord CASTLEREAGH then rose, and, before he entered into a detail of the scheme, made some remarks on the unfavorable reception which attended it in the preceding year, and on the change of sentiment which had taken place in the minds of many who were then hostile to the measure. The resistance to it, he said, had been principally occasioned by ignorance of its nature and misrepresentation of its effects. In proportion as it was more deliberately and fully investigated, the opposition to it became less general, and the clamors less violent. The great body of the landed property in Ireland became friendly to the principle; for the property of those who had declared in favor of it in the two houses of parliament, was, in comparison with the estates of its opponents, nearly in the proportion of three to one. Nineteen counties, whose superficial contents form five-sevenths of the island, had come forward in its support. He did not mean to assert, that these counties were unanimous in approving the measure. Complete and perfect unanimity was not to be expected upon any great political question: but he would venture to assert, that a very great proportion of the property in those counties decidedly favored it, and most of the great commercial towns in the kingdom

kingdom had also declared in its favor. When he spoke of Dublin, he begged to be understood as speaking of it with that high respect, which the zeal and loyalty of its inhabitants, conspicuously displayed in the trying circumstances of the late rebellion, so fully demanded; but he could not refrain from observing, that they seemed at present to be affected with the same unreasonable apprehensions and alarms which were felt by the citizens of Edinburgh at the time of the union with Scotland. Those apprehensions, those alarms, had been proved to be ideal and unfounded; and he trusted that the citizens of Dublin would live to change their fears into satisfaction, and, like the citizens of Edinburgh, would have cause to be thankful to Providence for the accomplishment of an union with Great-Britain, and grateful to those who should assist in its completion.

He then animadverted on the proceedings of the chief adversaries of the union.—‘ I acknowledge, (he said) that some counties have manifested a disposition adverse to this measure; but this circumstance does not affect me with surprise, as it is known, that their sentiments have been greatly influenced by the exertions and the connexions of the gentlemen on the other side of the house; nor is it to be wondered at, that much opposition should have recently broken forth in some parts of the country, when we advert to the new political phænomenon which has appeared in this metropolis since the last debate. We have seen a part of the minority not satisfied with exercising their deliberative powers within these walls, but organising themselves in another place, empowering certain persons to send their letters missive through the country,

try, and establishing agents in the different counties, to bring the mass of the people to the bar of this house, as petitioners against the measure of union. From my knowledge of the characters of many of the gentlemen who constitute this new authority, I am induced to believe, that they never entertained an intention of employing popular interference to intimidate parliament; and I am equally convinced, that, if such an intention had existed, the commons of Ireland would not yield their independence to any such desperate attempt. But I am sorry to say, that some of the agents of those gentlemen, some of the persons who have been employed to disseminate their letters missive through the country, have gone forth with the most unwarrantable pretences, and adopted the most treacherous artifices, and the most ludicrous misrepresentations, to deceive and distract the populace, whose signatures against an union they wished to obtain. Every one knows the ignorance of the lower classes in this kingdom, and how easily they may be misled by the most shallow and pitiful misrepresentations. In one of the northern counties it has been given out by these agents, that the union was a project of Mr. Pitt, by which he might lay a tax of five shillings on every wheel, and ten shillings on every loom. In another place, it was intimated to the tenantry, that an union would put an end to all their leases; and, as a great proportion of the landed interest in the county of Down supported the measure, this circumstance was urged as a proof of the assertion: "Do you not see," it was said, "that the landlords are all for the measure? and is not that a demonstration that it will break your leases?" Such are the wretched deceptions and paltry practices to which many have resorted, in order to
mislead

mislead the lower classes, and to obtain success in soliciting the petitions that have been produced to the house. Far from wondering at their number, when I reflect upon the situation of the country, and the practices of the agents who have been employed, I am only surprised that they are not more numerous. But what was the case on the Scottish union? The table of the parliament was, day after day, for the space of three months, covered with such petitions: but the Scottish legislators acted as, I trust, the Irish parliament will act; they considered only the public advantage; and, steadily pursuing that object, neither misled by artifices nor intimidated by tumult, they received, in the gratitude of their country, that reward which amply compensated their arduous labors in the great work so happily accomplished. This house, I hope, will behave with equal fortitude, and, unseduced by party and unawed by clamor, will steadily view the real merits of the measure, will steadily attend to the sound and well-informed part of the community, looking for a compensation of toil in the tranquillity and happiness of the country, and in the gratitude and praises of posterity.'

Adverting to the principle of the measure, his lordship observed, that, as this point had been very fully and ably discussed both in parliament and in various publications, it would not be necessary for him to dwell upon it. It had in particular been investigated with such depth of argument, and such sound ability*, in a speech which had been committed to the press, that he considered the general principle as 'placed beyond question or doubt.'

* By Mr. Smith.

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With regard to the mode of proceeding which the projectors of the scheme intended to adopt, he premised, that it was originally their wish to follow the form pursued in the union with Scotland, and to propose the appointment of commissioners of both realms, who might digest articles for the consideration of the two parliaments; but that, as this plan had been prevented by the refusal of the Irish house of commons to allow a discussion of the question, it became expedient for his majesty's ministers to adopt measures which might defeat the misrepresentations of their views, and unfold to this kingdom the liberal intentions of Great-Britain. For this purpose they had introduced into the British parliament those articles which were now transmitted to Ireland, forming a basis for more extensive resolutions. After the minute investigation of these articles in the parliament of Ireland, and the detailed application of the general principles involved in them, the matured scheme would be submitted to the approbation of each legislature, and eventually sanctioned by solemn acts.

The secretary's first proposition stated the grand object in terms similar to those of the first resolution of the British parliament. The three articles which followed tended 'to establish the complete identity of the executive power in every possibility of circumstance and in every application of authority.' Some would think that this object was secured by the act of annexion; but, though he venerated that act as the only bond now connecting this realm with Britain, he considered it, both in principle and operation, as extremely defective. In principle, it gave to the parliament of another country, in which the Irish are not represented, one of the most important legislative pow-

ers, that of regulating the succession to the crown. That the practice was not less defective than the principle, appeared in the case of the regency; for the prince of Wales was absolutely constituted regent by the address of the Hibernian legislature, before a regent was appointed by Great-Britain; so that the unity of the executive power was made to depend, not on the provisions of the act of annexion, but on a casual coincidence of choice between the parliaments.

To prove the danger of so imperfect a connexion, his lordship instanced the conduct of James II., when, after his abdication of the crown of England, he repaired to Ireland, and made use of the parliament as an instrument for erecting his opposition to England, and establishing a distinct monarchy in Ireland. Thus the strongest proof was afforded of the tendency of distinct legislatures to ultimate and total separation.

He then put some questions respecting the predicament in which Ireland stands in the important cases of war, of peace, of treaties. 'Is she not, in order to avoid the danger of separation, and to prevent the ruin of the empire, obliged to adopt and register, without deliberation, the edicts of Great-Britain? In recording her assent, is she not constrained to give up every consideration of her private interests, and to sacrifice every feeling of pride and independence? Does she not feel jealousy and discontent from this circumstance? and, if the country should advance in wealth, prosperity, and power, will not such a state of subordination aggravate her discontent, and will not, of course, the danger of separation increase with the motives for effecting it?'

'But these,' he added, 'are not the only objections to our present mode of connexion. It has been a frequent
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and just ground of complaint in this house, that the minister of this country, acting as he does under the direction of a British cabinet, is not responsible to the Irish parliament from the moment of his withdrawing from this kingdom, unless, by a derogation from our independence, we should impeach him at the bar of the parliament of Great-Britain for offending against the constitution of Ireland.'—'Who,' he asked, 'advises the measures of the Irish government? The English minister. And how can the Irish parliament reach *him*? Who administers the great seal of England, without which no legislative act can be ratified? An English minister. And how can the Irish parliament reach *him*? In short, how can an efficient and constitutional responsibility be obtained, but by making the jurisdiction of parliament as comprehensive as the executive power? And this, I must ever maintain, can be effected by an union alone.

'It is said, that an union will reduce Ireland to the abject state of a colony. Is it by making her a constituent part of the greatest and first empire in the world? For my part, if I were to describe a colony, I should picture a country in a situation somewhat similar to the present state of Ireland. I should describe a country, whose crown was dependent on that of another country, enjoying a local legislature, but without any power intrusted to that legislature of regulating the succession to that crown. I should describe it as having an executive power administered by the orders of a non-resident minister, irresponsible to the colony for his acts or his advice; I should describe it as incapable of passing the most insignificant law without the licence of the minister of another country; I should describe it as a country unknown to foreign nations in

the quality of an independent state, and as subject to another power with regard to all the questions which concern alliances, the declaration and conduct of war, or the negotiations for peace.

‘ Another objection has been started, that an imperial parliament cannot be possessed of such local knowledge of the kingdom as is necessary for the due encouragement of its interests. But I ask, what is there to prevent the representatives of Ireland from carrying with them to the imperial parliament all their local knowledge of the wants and interests of Ireland? And what is there to prevent an imperial parliament from attending as anxiously to the concerns of this part of the empire, as to the concerns of the west of England, or the affairs of Scotland?

‘ It has also been asserted, that an union would have the effect of weakening the executive power in Ireland. Convinced as I am, that Ireland cannot exist without a strong executive power, and that the lives and properties of its loyal inhabitants cannot be otherwise secured, I could not argue in favor of the advantages which are promised by this measure, were it to be followed by such a consequence. But I am so confident of the opposite effect, that it is upon this very principle of giving new vigor to the executive power, and of giving additional security to the persons and properties of the inhabitants, that I embrace the measure. It is an union alone that can give us strength, by removing the cause of our weakness. It will take away from the executive power all those jealousies, which hang upon its motions and prevent its constitutional effects: it will preclude the plausible insinuation, that we are governed by the influence of a parliament in which we are not represented; that we are directed by the

the counsels of ministers who are irresponsible; that our interests are sacrificed to those of Great-Britain: in short, it will remove all those constitutional awkwardnesses and anomalies which render all the exertions of the executive power suspected and inefficient, and, by rendering it unpopular, diminish and counteract its influence.

‘ There is another objection, which has been strongly urged and plausibly supported. It is this—that our parliament has, from the circumstance of its being local, been able to make exertions for suppressing the rebellion, which an imperial parliament would not have attempted. I most cordially admit, that the Irish parliament has most materially assisted the government by arming it with those ample powers which have been employed to suppress the rebellion. But, if it was parliament that gave the powers, it was the cabinet that employed them. And I ask, by what constitutional scruples would an imperial parliament be prevented from giving the same powers in similar circumstances, or the ministers of the empire be arrested in the exercise of them? And is it agreeable to common sense, or truth, that the acts of the parliament of the empire would have less authority than the acts of only a part of the empire?

‘ It has also been said, that a local parliament alone could have traced and developed the conspiracy which produced the late rebellion. Here is a mistake in point of fact. It was not the local parliament, but the executive government which discovered the conspiracy. It was the government that detected the plans of the traitors; and it was upon the documents produced by the government that the accurate report of the secret committee was formed. The merits of the report in dis-

closing the information as a warning to the public, after the treason was detected and defeated, may be ascribed to the parliament; but the discovery of the conspiracy, and the suppression of the rebellion, arose from the energies of the executive government.'

Having thus strongly supported the expediency of an united government and legislature, the ministerial speaker proceeded to an examination of the financial and commercial parts of the subject, postponing the discussion of the mode of constituting the Hibernian portion of the imperial parliament. The union, he said, had been represented as a mere financial project of the British minister, a mere aim upon the pockets of the Irish: but, if any sacrifice should be made, it would be on the part of Great-Britain, not of Ireland. The settlement proposed was one which promised advantage to Ireland; and it was offered on the fair and liberal ground of proportional contribution, not as a bribe, not on the mercenary principle, that Ireland would sacrifice to any pecuniary consideration what might be deemed essential to her happiness.

If the two countries could at once be so completely incorporated, as not to be under the necessity of having distinct revenues, he would have considered it as a most valuable circumstance in the financial arrangement. This principle formed a part of the Scottish union; but, the circumstances of Great-Britain and Ireland not suffering its application, on account of the very great disproportion of the public debts of the two realms, it was necessary to pursue a separate system of taxation; and the great point to be ascertained was, what would be the best criterion of the relative means of both countries. A tax upon income would seem to afford the best criterion; but, as the local circumstances
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of Ireland would not at present permit the operation of this test, the criterion next in order must be considered—namely, the joint result of commerce and consumption. He then entered into the following detail.

‘ Upon a comparison of the average value of the imports and exports of Great-Britain for three years, ending with January 1799, compared with those of Ireland ending on the 25th of March preceding, I find that the value of British commerce amounted to 73,961,899*l.*, and that of Irish commerce to 10,925,961*l.* and that they bear the proportion to each other of nearly seven to one. On a similar comparison of the value of the following articles, viz. malt, beer, spirits, wine, tea, tobacco, sugar, consumed in the respective countries, I find that the value of the British articles amounted to 46,891,655*l.*, and that of the Irish articles to 5,954,856*l.* forming a proportion of 7 and 7-8ths to one. The medium, therefore, or $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, may be taken as the fair proportion; and I would maintain, that upon this principle Great-Britain ought to contribute fifteen parts, and Ireland two, to the general expences of the empire.

‘ In the article which relates to this head, the first section provides, that the past debts of the two kingdoms shall be borne by them respectively; and, if we couple this liberal provision with the 9th section of the article, which gives to Ireland a participation in whatever sums may be produced from the territorial revenues of the dependencies of Great-Britain in India, we must acknowledge not only the justice but the generosity of the terms. Great-Britain holds out to Ireland a proportional enjoyment of all the advantages of the empire, without requiring the smallest participation in the burthens which she has incurred to procure them; and

Ireland will acquire a revenue of 58,000*l.* a-year, in ease of her own burthens, out of the revenues paid by the East-India company, from the territories subdued by British arms.

‘ By the second section, the proportional contribution of 15 to 2 will continue for twenty years, that the system of the union may acquire stability, before it be subjected to the slightest modification.

‘ When I stated the system of contributing on the principle of proportional ability, I was aware that a natural objection would arise, that, however fair or liberal this system might appear at present, it might at a future period, and under different circumstances, prove to be both partial and disadvantageous. It is therefore intended, that the imperial parliament shall have a power to revise the proportion at the given period I have mentioned, but that the revision shall be grounded upon the same principles upon which the original proportion is formed, and limited to the result of those principles. Our contributions, therefore, may hereafter vary according to our relative increased or diminished ability; but, until the period of a common taxation shall arise, the principles and the basis of our contribution are unalterably fixed. The only power reserved to the imperial parliament, is to examine and ascertain the *criteria* by which the abilities of the two countries are to be determined: the *criteria* themselves are to remain unaltered and unalterable: and, since they are of such a nature that they cannot fail of leading to a fair result, Ireland has by these means the utmost possible security, that she cannot be taxed beyond the measure of her comparative ability, and that the ratio of her contribution must ever correspond with her relative wealth and prosperity.

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‘ By the fourth section, the revenues of Ireland will constitute a consolidated fund, which will be charged in the first place with the interest and sinking fund of the debt of Ireland, and be afterwards appropriated to its proportional contribution. The 5th section gives power to the imperial parliament to impose such taxes in Ireland as may be necessary for her contingent ; but it shall in no case be enabled to impose higher taxes, after the union, upon any article in Ireland, than the same article shall bear in Great-Britain. The sixth section ascertains the manner in which any surplus of the revenues of Ireland may be applied. There are four considerations which occur with respect to any occasional excess of revenue. The first, and most obvious, is the diminution of taxes ; the second is the application of such excess to local purposes of ornament or improvement in Ireland ; the third is to provide against any possible failure of revenue ; the fourth is to suffer such excess to accumulate at compound interest, in case of our contribution in a future period of war.

‘ It is provided by the seventh section, that all future loans, for the interest and liquidation of which the respective countries have made provision in the proportion of their respective contributions, shall be considered as joint debt ; and, on the other hand, that, where they do not make corresponding provisions, their respective quotas of the sum so raised shall remain a separate charge.

‘ The eighth section contains a provision, that, when the separate debts of the two kingdoms shall be either extinguished, or in the proportion of their respective contributions, the general expences of the empire may be thenceforward borne by common taxes,
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in lieu of proportional contribution. It may perhaps be alleged, that common taxes with Great-Britain will impose upon this kingdom heavier burthens than she would otherwise be required to support. But let the house consider, that the charges of the debt of Great-Britain amount to twenty millions a year, and the charges of the debt of Ireland to 1,300,000*l.* of British money a-year; and that common taxes are not to take place, till either the past and separate debts of both countries shall be liquidated, or till they shall become to each other in the proportion of their contributions; that is, in the ratio of 15 to 2. Before this can take place, the taxes of Great-Britain must be reduced by the amount of ten millions a-year; in which case, the scale of her remaining taxation would be lowered to the scale of taxation in Ireland, and the adoption of British taxation would become a benefit. A similar result would take place, and to a greater degree, were the past debt of the two countries to be entirely liquidated: for, in this event, Ireland would be exonerated from taxes, to the amount of 1,300,000*l.* a-year, and Britain to the amount of 20,000,000*l.* and the system of common taxation would become still more beneficial to Ireland. It may happen, however, that if war should continue, and Ireland fund her supplies, whilst England raises a great part of her's within the year, and mortgages her income tax to their rapid reduction in peace, the proportion of the debt of Ireland may rise, and her scale of taxation increase accordingly. In this case, also, the system of common taxation perfectly secures the interests of Ireland, being produced by natural causes and in no degree forced. It cannot impose any burthen on this country, to which she would not in the ordinary course of her expenditure be liable, whilst
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the provision, which goes to preclude any article from being subject to a higher rate of duty in Ireland than the same article pays in Great-Britain, will exempt her from having the scale of her taxation raised above that of England, even though the natural progress of her expence should lead to it. And whilst Ireland is thus secured against any injustice in substituting a system of common taxes for proportional contribution, the united parliament will be enabled to make abatements in Ireland, as the parliament of Great-Britain always has done in Scotland since the union; where, from local circumstances, the high duty cannot be levied without either rendering the revenue unproductive, or pressing with too much weight upon the poorer classes.

‘ It now remains for me to consider the operation and effect of this article, and how far the proportion of $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 may be favorable or otherwise to Ireland, considered with reference to the past expences of the two countries, as also to their probable future expenditure.

‘ The peace establishment of Great-Britain, in the year preceding the war, amounted to 5,806,744*l.*, and that of Ireland to 1,012,523*l.* The proportion of these sums is about $5\frac{3}{4}$ to 1. On an average of seven years, from the commencement of the war, Great-Britain has expended in each year 27,650,649*l.*, and Ireland 3,076,651*l.* The proportion of these sums is about 9 to 1. As, however, upon the experience of the past century, it is found that there are three years of peace to two of war; if we form our calculations upon this proportion, the past expences of Great-Britain and Ireland may be considered in the ratio of $7\frac{1}{4}$ to 1.

‘ Such is the result as to past expenditure. I shall

now

now state what we may expect from the proportion of $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, in our future expences.

‘ The expence of Great-Britain, for the year 1799, was 32,700,000*l.*, and that of Ireland 5,439,000*l.* If this expence had been borne in the proportion of $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, Great-Britain would have expended 33,652,059*l.*, and Ireland 4,486,941*l.* : the latter would have, consequently, saved 952,059*l.*, or 1,025,294*l.* in Irish currency. So long as the war shall last, and we shall continue separate from Britain, we cannot suppose that our expence will be reduced ; and therefore we shall in future expend more by one million a year, than if we were united with Great-Britain.

‘ I shall now advert to the probable future expences of Ireland in time of peace ; and, if we consider the advanced pay of the army, the increased charge of the militia, the necessity of keeping up some part of that invaluable force, the yeomanry, we shall find it impossible to maintain a peace establishment of only 12,000 men at home at a less charge than 1,500,000*l.* a-year ; and, if we should increase our establishment to 20,000 men, the whole charge would amount to 1,900,000*l.* a-year. Now, from the best documents which I have been able to procure, it is probable that the peace establishment of Great-Britain will amount to about 7,500,000*l.* ; and, if we add that of Ireland, the whole charge will be nine millions. If this charge be borne in the ratio of $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, there will be a saving to Ireland of 450,000*l.* British, or nearly 500,000*l.* Irish currency.

‘ Let us for a moment turn to the situation of the public revenues. The produce of all the taxes in the last year amounted merely to 1,850,000*l.* ; and the
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present charges of the debt alone are 1,400,000*l.* Irish currency. I will, however, admit, that the revenues of this kingdom have, during the present year, experienced an extraordinary increase; and, though it is not to be supposed that the whole of this increase can be permanent, when we may account for it by the particular circumstances of the times, I will suppose that the revenues may produce a permanent sum of 2,300,000*l.* The charge of our debt is 1,400,000*l.*; and the peace establishment, at the lowest computation, will be 1,500,000*l.* The total expence therefore will be 2,900,000*l.*; and, if we remain a separate state, there will be an annual deficiency of 600,000*l.* which we must endeavour to supply by new burthens upon the people, besides raising additional taxes of 250,000*l.* a-year, so long as the war shall continue. If, on the contrary, we wisely unite with Great-Britain, and agree in a system of contribution proportioned to our respective means, the future charge of our war expence will be diminished a million a year, and we shall be able to support our peace expenditure with a very slight addition to the present taxes. I now then confidently appeal to those gentlemen around me, who have a real stake in the interests and happiness of this country, and I trust they will seriously pause and deliberate before they suffer advantages like those which I have stated, to be rejected without discussion, or to be decided by wild and senseless clamor.'

The affairs of commerce formed the next branch of inquiry; and on this head his lordship observed, that the principles which were to form the basis of the agreement did not materially differ from the plan brought forward in the year 1785. It was highly desirable, he said, that the commerce and intercourse
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between Britain and Ireland should be as free as between two counties of the same kingdom; but there were two circumstances which prevented such an adjustment: these were, the necessity of securing particular manufactures by protecting duties, and the difference of internal taxes, consequent on the disparity of burthen sustained by Great-Britain.

Speaking of the first section of the commercial article, by which the subjects and the produce of each country would be placed upon an equal footing for ever, with regard to privileges, encouragements, and bounties, he said, 'This gives the continuance for ever of the British and Irish bounties on the exportation of Irish linen, and affords us a full participation in the great article of sail-cloth.' The next section, relative to the exportation of all commodities from one country to the other without duty, he noticed in these words: 'This secures to Ireland for ever the raw materials which she receives from Britain, and which she can procure from no other country—coals, tin, bark, alum, hops, and salt: it also concedes to Ireland the staple commodity of English wool.'—'The same section (he added) puts an end to all bounties whatever on the articles of trade between the kingdoms, with an exception of malt, flour, and grain, which, it is proposed, may still be regulated on the present system.'

The third section, respecting the articles which should be subject to duty in either country, gave rise to the following observations. 'To give adequate protection to the fabrica of this kingdom, a duty of 10 *per cent.* on the true value will be fully sufficient, in addition to the charges of freight, &c. which are estimated at 5½ *per cent.* Any manufacture in Ireland that cannot be carried on with a protecting guard of 15½ *per cent.* against the

the manufacturer of England, where taxes are higher and labor dearer, cannot deserve much encouragement. Nor is it fair in such a case to sacrifice the interests of the consumer, or encourage by high duties the habits of indolence. When I fix this rate of protection, I wish it to continue for such a period of years as will give security to the speculations of the manufacturers; at the same time I look forward to a period when duties of this kind may gradually be diminished and ultimately cease. It must be evident, that, if our manufactures keep pace for the next twenty years with the progress they have made in the last twenty years, they may at the expiration of the term be fully able to cope with the British, and the two kingdoms may be safely left, like any two counties of the same kingdom, to a free competition. It is therefore provided, that after twenty years the united parliament may diminish the duties of protection, in such a ratio as the situation of our manufactures at that period may render expedient. As all articles, except those enumerated in the resolution, are to be free from duty upon import, I must draw the attention of the house to the perpetual security which is here offered to the linen manufacture of this kingdom. It has been frequently asserted, that this manufacture derives all its prosperity from the encouragement which it has received from our local parliament; but I have ever contested the truth of that statement. The prosperity of the linen manufacture results not from domestic encouragement, but depends on its possession of the British market, and the British bounties on re-exportation. What then gives us that market but the liberality of Great-Britain, which imposes a duty of 33 *per cent.* upon foreign linens, and admits Irish linens without duty. The whole quantity

tity of linen imported into Great-Britain amounts to 50,000,000 of yards, of which 33 millions go from Ireland. Now, if a duty of 33 *per cent.* should be laid upon Irish linen as well as foreign, it would produce a sum of more than a million a-year to the revenue of Britain; and the trade would thus be thrown altogether into the hands of the foreign manufacturer.

‘ It has been urged, that the encouragements granted to Irish linen were in consequence of a compact that the Irish parliament should give up the woollen manufacture. It must have been a singular compact indeed, by which Great-Britain was irrevocably to bind herself to impose on her own subjects the burthen of a million sterling *per annum*, in order to secure an export of woollen goods, which has never exceeded 680,000*l.* a year. But, if I should allow that a compact existed, Ireland, by this proposal, will have both parts of it; she will keep what she has by linens, and recover what she is supposed to have given up in woollens as the price of these encouragements. She will not only enjoy for ever the British markets for her linen trade, but will receive the raw material of England for the improvement and extension of her woollen trade; and she will have British bounties to favor the re-exportation of the former, and low British duties to encourage the importation of the latter.

‘ Some have affirmed, that Great-Britain lays the high duty on the foreign linens to protect her own manufacture, and not to favor ours. If it be admitted, what prevents her from laying the same duty on Irish linens? Can any other reason be assigned than disposition to protect the manufactures of Ireland? If Great-Britain should only impose a protecting duty of 10 *per cent.* on the import of Irish linens in favor of her own,
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she would only act towards us as we do towards her in almost all the leading articles of British manufacture ; and what would be the effect ? It would exclude us in a great measure from her market. The foreign manufacturer, who now supplies nearly one-third of her demand, even under the disadvantage of a duty of 33 *per cent.* would then supply nearly the whole. The English consumer would buy his linens nearly at as cheap a rate, whilst the state would levy an annual revenue on the import, which is now sacrificed to the encouragement of the manufacture of this country. Is it then to the local parliament, or to the parliament of Great-Britain, that Ireland is indebted for these advantages ? It is to the parliament of Great-Britain alone, to the parliament of that country which has been described as the natural and instinctive enemy of Ireland, that we owe the obligation. That hostile country annually sacrifices a sum to the protection of the linen trade of this country, equal in amount to the total expence of our peace establishment as it stood before the war ; and, by this treaty, she binds herself to continue it for ever.'

Of the countervailing duties (mentioned in the fourth section) necessary to balance internal imposts, the necessity, he said, was evident, while the two countries should be subject to unequal taxes ; and, when the inequality of taxes should cease, and a common revenue take place, they would be discontinued.

Proceeding to the two next sections, he said, ' These may be of great commercial consequence, as they provide, that the charges upon the re-exportation of native, foreign, and colonial goods, shall be the same in both countries, and that no drawbacks shall be retained upon any article exported from either country to the other.

All who consider and understand the nature of our commerce and the advantages of our situation must allow the great benefit of securing the perpetuity of these regulations to Ireland. It is acknowledged, that the situation of Ireland is much more convenient for the re-export trade than Great-Britain, as we are not subject to the dangerous and tedious navigation of the channels; but, when it is considered that the transit or re-export trade of Britain amounts to 14,000,000*l.* a year, gentlemen will admit, that the prospect of national advantage from this part of the system highly deserves our attention, and that there is no benefit which the cities of Cork and Dublin may not expect, when, in order to carry this article into effect, the system of bonding foreign goods for exportation shall be extended, and arrangements be made for converting those harbours as far as possible into free ports.

‘ Upon a review of the result of this article, we find our linen trade secured, the prospect of a great woollen trade opened, a great manufactory of sail-cloth encouraged, the British market opened to us by low duties (in case of our skilful use of our domestic advantages), and at the same time secured for our great provisioning trade, whilst an additional encouragement is given to our farmers, in taking off the duty from the produce of their lands.

‘ In considering the effect of the proposed commercial regulations upon the revenue, we shall again find the advantage of the system. The duties on the exportation of our hides, tallow, cattle, and provisions, which produce 44,000*l.* will cease; and the loss of revenue by taking off duties, and by lowering duties from 12½ to 10 *per cent.*, will amount to 32,000*l.* Thus the total loss will be 76,000*l.*: but, to balance this loss,

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we shall gain the duty of 1s. 3d. a ton upon coals, which is raised at present upon Irish consumption, and amounts *per annum* to 17,000*l.*; we shall gain the duties which are retained in England on subsidy goods, 9,000*l.*; we shall receive our proportion of 500,000*l.* from the India company, 58,000*l.*, the whole amounting to 84,000*l.* Thus taxes will be remitted, which at present are raised either on Irish produce or Irish consumption, whilst the loss of revenue will be fully compensated by a transfer of duties now payable into the British exchequer.'

The eighth section he thus characterised: 'It provides that a sum equal to what is now applied to charitable purposes, and to the encouragement of manufactures, shall continue to be so appropriated annually by the united parliament; thus securing a continuance of the linen board, and other local institutions, which have hitherto received parliamentary bounty.'

From this survey of what he pronounced to be a fair and liberal article, he reverted to that which was the fifth in order, and briefly discussed the ecclesiastical part of the plan of union. The leading features of the whole system, he said, were, one state, one legislature, one church; and, if there should not be an identity with Britain in these great points of connexion, Ireland could not expect to enjoy real and permanent security. The church in particular, as long as the separation should continue, would ever be liable to be impeached upon local grounds, and would be unable to maintain itself effectually against the argument of physical force, by which it was continually attacked: but, when once it should be completely incorporated with the church of England, it would be placed upon such a strong and

natural foundation, as to be above all apprehensions or alarms from adverse interest.

‘ While the countries remain separate,’ said this plausible advocate for an union, ‘ the government of Ireland must be a choice between dangers and difficulties. Pressed by these difficulties, different ministers will entertain different opinions, as to the best mode of preserving Ireland in connexion with Britain, and of upholding its establishments. One minister will be inclined to maintain the protestant authority in its utmost strictness, and will consider the principle of catholic exclusion as the means of security and the best bond of connexion. Another minister, finding the difficulty still prominent and pressing, may throw himself for relief on principles more consonant to the population of the country, and may propose to open the constitution to all sects. Hence the principles upon which our separate government will be conducted will be unsteady and fluctuating. This circumstance alone must bring into action, with ten-fold violence, the natural dissensions of Ireland, by alternately flattering and discouraging the hopes of the contentious interests ; and a firm government, and a steady system, can never be hoped for so long as the constitution and establishments of Ireland can be made a subject of separate question and experiment.

‘ The protestant, so long as the establishment remains separate, and is impeached on local grounds, will feel his power, his property, and his government insecure, and must naturally look with distrust and jealousy on the catholic : the catholic will feel proportionate alienation and resentment, and will continually urge his claims against the establishment of the minority ;

rity; and there appears no hope whatever of a termination to distrust, jealousy, and alarm. But, when the ecclesiastical establishments of the two kingdoms shall be incorporated into one church, the protestant will feel himself at once identified with the population and property of the empire, and the establishment will be placed upon its natural basis. The cause of distrust must vanish with the removal of weakness; strength and confidence will produce liberality; and the claims of the catholics may be temperately discussed and impartially decided before an imperial parliament, divested of those local circumstances which produce irritation and jealousy.

‘ It may not be improper to take some notice of the imputation that the catholic clergy have been *bribed* to the support of this measure. This is an illiberal imputation thrown out for the dangerous purpose of weakening their authority over, by lowering them in the opinion of, their flocks; for it is known that an arrangement for the clergy, both catholic and protestant dissenters, has been long in the contemplation of his majesty’s ministers. As to the insinuation, that the measure of union is a measure of bribery; if bribery and public advantage are synonymous, I readily admit that it is a measure of the most comprehensive bribery that was ever produced. It bribes all the inhabitants of Ireland, by offering to embrace them within the pale of the British constitution, and to communicate to them all the advantage of British commerce. But perhaps there is one class in the community to which an union would not act as a bribe: I allude to those who call themselves the lovers of liberty and independence; of that liberty, which consists in the abdication of the British constitution; that independence,

which consists in the abandonment of British connexion. I acknowledge, that these are bribes which I am not prepared to offer: there are many with whom I am not prepared to make any treaty, but the treaty of the law.'

The only remaining question of importance was that which related to the constitution of the parliament. The representation of Ireland by equal numbers having been urged as a measure requisite for a fair union, his lordship reprobated the idea as founded on the common and refuted error, that the two kingdoms, after an union, would retain distinct and adverse interests. If this should be admitted, the proposed remedy, he thought, would even augment the disorder. Rival interests, far from being remedied by equality of numbers, would, from the circumstance of such equality, break forth into jealous and hostile competition. It would therefore be advisable to proceed upon an opposite principle, and, on the ground of a community of interest between incorporated kingdoms, adjust the number of representatives by the *criteria* of wealth and population.

'The population of Ireland (he said) is in general estimated from 3,500,000 to 4,000,000. The population of Great-Britain is supposed to exceed 10,000,000. The contribution, which it is proposed that Ireland shall furnish to the expences of the empire, is as one to $7\frac{1}{2}$. These two proportions taken together will produce a mean proportion of about $5\frac{1}{4}$ to 1. I am therefore of opinion, that, if Ireland shall send one hundred members to represent her in the imperial house of commons, she will be fairly and adequately represented.

'With reference to the peerage, I would propose that the representative body for Ireland should consist of

of four spiritual and twenty-eight temporal lords: and, when it is considered that above forty noblemen who have great interests and stake in this kingdom are already peers of Great-Britain, I flatter myself that our interests in that branch of the legislature will be sufficiently maintained by a body so numerous and respectable.

‘ With regard to the appointment of the peers, who are to sit in the imperial parliament, I would propose that the four spiritual peers should sit by rotation of sessions, and that, for the prevention of the inconveniences which result from septennial elections, the twenty-eight temporal peers should be returned for life. Such an arrangement appears at once best calculated to secure their independence, and to preserve, as far as possible, the hereditary principle of the peerage. It is also intended to interfere in as small a degree as possible with any existing privileges of the peerage of Ireland; and I shall suggest, with this view, that the peers of Ireland may still be allowed to sit in the house of commons of the united parliament, for any county or borough of Great-Britain; but that, during the period of their thus sitting as commoners, they shall be tried as commoners, and be precluded from representing the Irish peerage, or voting at the election of any peer; and, as the Irish peerage materially differs from the Scotch, the titles of the latter being entailed generally, and the former limited to the heirs male, it is intended to reserve a power to the crown of creating Irish peers, provided that the number of peers existing at the time of the union be not augmented.

‘ In forming the representation of the commons of Ireland, I shall suggest the expediency of increasing

the proportion, and strengthening the influence of the counties. This principle was wisely adopted in the Scottish union, when the representatives for the counties amounted to thirty, and those of the boroughs to fifteen. In following this precedent, I intend to propose that the sixty-four members for counties shall be elected as at present, and that thirty-six shall represent the chief cities and towns of the kingdom. Here the proportion is nearly the same.

‘ In order to produce a return of thirty-six members only, to represent the boroughs and cities of Ireland, which consist of one hundred and eighteen places, we must have recourse to some principle, either of selection or combination. The latter principle was followed in the union with Scotland, where the boroughs were divided into fifteen classes, each class consisting of four or five boroughs, each borough electing a delegate, and the majority of delegates choosing a Burgess. It has, however, been found by experience, that this mode of election is subject to much inconvenience and cabal; and I would therefore advise, that only the most considerable towns in the kingdom should be permitted to send representatives, and that the privileges of the other boroughs should cease. I would propose that Cork and Dublin should each send two representatives as at present; that one should be returned by the university; and that the thirty-one most considerable cities and towns of Ireland, whose relative importance is to be measured by the joint consideration of their wealth and population, should each send a member to the imperial parliament.’

In selecting the towns which should retain the privilege of sending members to parliament, the criterion
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recommended by his lordship was not injudicious ; for he suggested that there were no means by which the relative importance of towns could be more adequately ascertained than by the combined result of the hearth-money and window-tax.

As the disfranchisement of many boroughs diminished the influence and privileges of those gentlemen whose property was connected with such places of election, he endeavoured to obviate their complaints by promising, that, if the plan which he then submitted to the house should be finally approved, he would offer some measure of compensation to those individuals whose peculiar interests should suffer in the arrangement.

‘ Much and deep objection (he added) may be stated to such a measure ; but it, surely, is consonant with the privileges of private justice ; it is calculated to meet the feelings of the moderate ; and it is better to resort to such a measure, however objectionable, than adhere to the present system, and keep afloat, for ever, the dangerous question of parliamentary reform. If this be a measure of purchase, let us recollect that it will be the purchase of peace, and the expence of it will be redeemed by one year’s saving of the union.

‘ It will perhaps be objected, that a representation formed on the principle which I have suggested, may be too popular in its nature and effects ; and, indeed, if Ireland were to remain separate from Great-Britain, I should feel the full weight of that objection ; but, as our representation is to be mixed with that of Britain, I conceive, that any danger arising from its popular constitution will be sufficiently counteracted by the consistency and stability of that body.’

Of the last article he said, ‘ This will provide for the continuance of the existing laws, for the preservation

tion of the courts of justice in their present state, for the removal of appeals to the house of lords of the imperial parliament, and for subjecting the prize court of admiralty to the lord high admiral of the empire.' He then spoke of the general plan in the following terms.

' Having now gone through the outline of the plan with as much conciseness as possible, I trust I have proved to every man who hears me, that the proposal is such an one as is at once honorable for Great-Britain to offer, and for Ireland to accept. It is one which will entirely remove from the executive power those anomalies which are the perpetual sources of jealousy and discontent. It is one which will relieve the apprehensions of those who feared that Ireland was, in consequence of an union, to be burthened with the debt of Britain. It is one which, by establishing a fair principle of contribution, tends to release Ireland from an expence of one million in time of war, and of 500,000*l.* in time of peace. It is one which increases the resources of our commerce, protects our manufactures, secures to us the British market, and encourages all the produce of our soil. It is one that, by uniting the ecclesiastical establishments, and consolidating the legislatures of the empire, puts an end to religious jealousy, and removes the possibility of separation. It is one that places the great question, which has so long agitated the country, upon the broad principles of imperial policy, and divests it of all its local difficulties. It is one that establishes such a representation for the country, as must lay asleep for ever the question of parliamentary reform, which, combined with our religious divisions, has produced all our distractions and calamities.'

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The speech which we have so amply reported, concluded with a panegyric on the minister who planned the scheme; to whose 'penetrating sagacity and invincible constancy of mind, under the most tremendous dangers,' not only this island owed its security, but all Europe was indebted for its preservation from anarchy and desolation. As, on a recurrence of danger, Great-Britain might not have 'such a character to rise up again for her salvation,' it was highly expedient, said lord Castlereagh, to 'seize the present moment, and strengthen the Irish constitution by blending and uniting it for ever with the great and powerful empire of Britain.' If this important object should be accomplished, and if at any future time the enemies of Britain and of mankind should be let loose upon the social world, Ireland, he doubted not, would be 'in such a situation of unanimity and power, as to bear a conspicuous part with Great-Britain in the glorious task of restoring the liberties of Europe.'

Mr. G. PONSONBY now attacked the Irish minister with his usual eloquence and vivacity. He first retorted the remark respecting the political phenomenon, by applying it to the conduct of the secretary, who presumptuously pressed a measure which the nation still disapproved and even detested, and to the proceedings of the 'representative of majesty, who had appealed from the sense of parliament to the lowest orders of the people, and had made the tour of Ireland to canvas in favor of a measure rejected by that parliament which so recently protected the Irish crown, and which, amidst popular convulsion and the tornado of rebellion, was the strong, the firm, and the saving bond of British connexion.' He proceeded to vindicate the anti-unionists who were accused of irregular practices,
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by observing, that, though ‘at any other time and under different circumstances such behaviour might be extraordinary,’ yet, when it was considered that a formidable rebellion was scarcely suppressed, and that martial law was in force, the interference of men of rank, property, and respectability, seemed to be necessary, ‘in order to shew to the people the safety and the propriety of expressing, in a constitutional manner, their sense of a measure which would deprive them of constitution, of liberty, of every thing dear and valuable to themselves and to their country.’

After treating as visionary the apprehension of danger from a difference of regency in the two kingdoms, he briefly discussed the topic of finance. He noticed the assertion of his lordship, that Mr. Pitt’s great object, instead of draining the purse of Ireland, was to save that country from expence, and place all its burthens on British shoulders. ‘This (he said) is a strange argument; and it would be curious to hear the English minister address the people on the subject, and thus describe the advantages: “People of England, rejoice! Your present burthens are but light—you pay but few taxes—your national debt only amounts to four or five hundred millions sterling, the interest of which is not more than eighteen millions a year—and your annual expences are not above seventy millions. Rejoice then, people of England! for I will tell you what will lighten your burthens. You will have the happiness, the glory, the magnanimity, of bearing with the load of England that of Ireland also.” Such an argument (he thought) would not have the least weight with any rational man in Ireland. It appeared, indeed, that Ireland, for twenty years, would defray only a seventh part of the general expenditure of the empire;

empire; but, at the expiration of that time, her proportion might be indefinitely increased, as she would then be taxed at the discretion of the united parliament. If she should obtain considerable relief, however, in point of finance, would she put such benefits in opposition to her liberties, or barter her independence for pecuniary gratifications?

On the subject of commerce, he contended, that the boasted encouragement given by England to the linen trade of Ireland could not be deemed an act of great liberality, as the Irish derived it from the surrender of their woollen manufacture, and from the consideration of mutual benefit; that the promised advantages did not require the accompaniment of an union; and that the menace of commercial hostility, consequent on the rejection of the offer, would be more injurious to England than to Ireland.

On the ecclesiastical establishment, 'the reasoning of the noble lord was somewhat extraordinary,' as he had spoken of the pleasure and advantage which the Irish would derive from finding their church the same with that of England. 'Is not that the case at present?' Mr. Ponsonby asked—'I can see no difference between the churches, except in the test law. But it seems that sameness is nothing without identity—an identity which will leave us no Irish church, and will transform our Irish into English bishops. Will the catholics be gratified by this identity, or will it make the various descriptions of protestant dissenters more satisfied?'

The idea of sending four prelates by rotation to the imperial legislature appeared to him to be ridiculous; and the other parts of the new scheme of parliamentary representation seemed more absurd than judicious, more disgraceful

disgraceful than honorable. The promise of making compensation to individuals for the close boroughs which would cease to send members to parliament, he stigmatised as an avowal of the existence of a profligate system, invasive of the constitutional rights of the people. Such a declaration tended to invalidate the competency of parliament, by proving the extent of that influence which prevented the house of commons from speaking the sense of the people. ‘What a comprehensive system of corruption!’ he exclaimed—‘the peers are to be purchased with a life privilege—the bishops are to be rotated, that the minister may have all the influence of the church—and two-thirds of the commons are declared to be a mere purchaseable commodity!’

He then summed up the effects of the union in these terms. ‘Your peerage is to be disgraced—your commons purchased—no additional advantage in commerce—for twenty years a little saving in contribution—but, if the cabinet of England think that we contribute more than we should, why not correct that extravagance now? If any thing should be conceded in the way of trade, why is it not conceded now? Are any of those benefits incompatible with our present state? No—but the minister wants to carry his union; and no favor, however trifling, can be yielded to us, unless we are willing to purchase it with the existence of parliament and the liberties of the country.’

A short speech of censure from sir John Parnell was succeeded by a long one from Mr. DOBBS, who, after a detail of the proceedings of 1782, in which he labored to establish the finality of the settlement, deprecated an union as not merely disadvantageous but ruinous to Ireland. If the treaty should stipulate every advantage to
Ireland

Ireland that she could desire, he declared that he would reject it, because there would be no security for its observance. From the instant of its enactment, the Irish would be under the absolute power of a British minister and a British parliament. Their representatives would become the devoted followers of the minister, and in return would be rewarded with the patronage of their country. They would be at once the bane of Ireland, and the ready instruments in the hands of the premier to destroy the little which he had left of the English constitution. The emigration of the nobles and gentry would entail poverty on the country; industry would be checked, and the moral improvement of the people prevented or retarded; the attachment of the tenants to their landlords would decline; and such discontent would arise, as might induce the government to establish martial law for the restraint of sedition. Dreading these effects, he earnestly exhorted the minister to banish the odious scheme from his mind, and solemnly besought the Almighty to enlighten the understandings and touch the hearts of those who were prejudiced in its favor. He at length consoled himself with reflecting, that it could never pass into an operative law. 'The fate of nations,' he said, 'is not in the hands of man. It is not the will of a British minister that can rob Ireland of her newly-acquired rights.—I proclaim it to the two nations, that the independence of Ireland is written in the immutable records of heaven.'

Colonel Vereker termed the union a most detestable and ruinous measure; Mr. Lee and Mr. Ogle condemned it with less acrimony; sir John Blaquiere renewed his efforts in its defence; Mr. Martin and Mr. Ormsby were also its strenuous advocates.

Mr. JOHN CLAUDIUS BERESFORD denied that the
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greater part of the property in the kingdom favored the union. Such a conclusion could not be drawn from the addresses which had been presented, while so many petitions proved the contrary. On the subject of the letters missive, he said, that 'he saw nothing very strange in such endeavours to procure the real sense of the country, when so many extraordinary means had been used to procure an apparent one.' With regard to the inconveniences which were apprehended from political differences between the parliaments, he observed, that some might be felt by England, but none by Ireland. The people did not wish to part with the legitimate guardians of their dearest rights and interests, for the sake of remedying a few inconveniences which England might suffer from the independence of the Irish parliament. Ireland had been described as a colony; but it was better that it should have the appearance of a colony, and enjoy its present freedom, than that, under the form of an united kingdom, it should suffer all the inconveniences of a colony. It was said, that all jealousies would be extinguished by the union; but this he did not believe; for England had sometimes treated the Scots, since the coalition of the British kingdoms, with commercial illiberality.—After some inconclusive objections to the financial statements of the secretary, he spoke of the affairs of the church. He admitted, that the establishment would be endangered by the emancipation of the catholics while Ireland should continue to have a separate parliament; but, in the event of an union, he said, he would promote the grant of the concessions which they desired.

Mr. BURROWES declared, that his opposition to the progress of the measure did not arise from the peculiar demerit

demerit of the plan now developed, but from his unwillingness to surrender the constitution of the realm upon any terms whatever, or to transfer the supreme power of the state to a country divided from Ireland by boundaries which could not be removed, and by feelings which could not be extinguished. 'If an union should pass,' he said, 'as an Irishman I shall be indifferent how many or how few deputies shall be sent from this emasculated country. As long as the parliament legislating for Ireland shall exist in the bosom of a distinct country, as long as a rival feeling shall actuate the heart of that country—that is, as long as the heart of man shall beat—this nation, deprived of its domestic parliament, will be the prostrate victim of British prejudice and oppression. This is sound theory; this is true history.' He was fully sensible, he added, of the value of British connexion; but he was convinced that it was compatible with Irish independence; and, as long as he should exist, he would defend those inestimable co-operating blessings with equal energy: no projecting jacobin, or projecting minister, should ever compel him to make a rash choice between them.

To the allegation, that the settlement of 1782 was not intended to preclude a reform or improvement of the Hibernian constitution, but was merely final in the abolition of British supremacy, he replied, that the present measure would be contrary to the idea of reform, as it would thwart the only view of those senators by whom a reform had ever been proposed, by rendering that house much less accessible to popular influence and sympathy; and that it would establish British supremacy in a more proud and uncontrolled state. Even the constitution which the Irish enjoyed

before that memorable æra, that proudest period of their history, was preferable, he said, to the new scheme, as a check to the domineering authority of Britain; and therefore, if the existing constitution should be demolished, he would recommend the re-establishment of the former system, rather than such an union as would 'turn the genius of the Irish constitution adrift, naked and unhoused, in these stormy and perilous times, to take refuge in the cottage of the peasant or the garret of the manufacturer.' On another ground he deprecated the measure, conceiving that it portended danger to the British constitution, from the additional influence which the introduction of the Irish members would give to the crown.

The competency of the parliament for the adoption of a change so momentous he was inclined to deny, as he could not suppose that temporary trustees had the least right to transfer the object of their trust for ever, without the consent of those through whom and for whom they held and exercised it. The affirmative side of this question, he said, was built upon a confusion of right with power. If this parliament should be deemed competent, the succeeding legislature would be equally competent to the abrogation or the change of any of the articles; and whatever might be said of public faith, the adherence to the terms would depend on the feelings of a rival nation or the conscience of a British minister.

Taking into consideration the state of the times, the means used by the promoters of the union, and the sentiments of the public, he declared himself hostile to the scheme on each of those grounds. An ambitious and unfeeling minister might think the time opportune for a great innovation, because a numerous
British

British army remained in the country, and because the people were nearly exhausted by an agonising conflict, or checked in their efforts of resistance by domestic discord. This might be an opportunity 'for rifling a nation of her honor and independence:' but an union thus formed would not be permanent or substantial: to ensure mutual prosperity, it must be concluded in a time of peace and tranquillity. The means, he added, were not the most justifiable. The parliament could not be said to exercise an unbiassed judgement, though he would not particularise the means by which it had been influenced. With regard to the opinion of the public, it was clear, he said, that the general voice was strongly adverse to the measure. The detestation of it was strikingly apparent in every quarter of the kingdom, and among all classes of people. This display of the national sentiment was an awful warning, interposed by the benignity of Providence between the rash projects of ministers and the irreparable mischief.—He finally prayed, that God would avert the storm, and save the nation.

Mr. EDGEWORTH, after an exordium in which he disclaimed all party connexion, discussed some points connected with the measure. He did not object to it as an innovation; for he was sensible of the beneficial result of the Revolution, and other transactions which might be deemed innovations. The settlement of 1782 was among these innovations; and he concurred in the opinion that it was intended to be final; but he by no means considered it as perfect. That the legislature was as competent to the enactment of an union as it was to the formation of that settlement, he firmly believed, though some would perhaps reply, that the parliament may negotiate for what will be advantageous,

but that it cannot surrender the rights or liberties of the people. To render this argument applicable, it must be proved that an union would involve such a surrender; but this was not a point of easy demonstration.

That the addition of one hundred Irish members to the British house of commons would render that assembly more dependent on the crown, he was not disposed to admit. The members chosen for counties and cities were allowed to be the most independent and the least liable to corruption. At present, in the Irish house of commons, the representatives for counties and cities did not form a third; and, in Great-Britain, they were about that proportion; but, in the united parliament, they would amount to four-ninths. By this addition, he said, an opportunity of reform would be afforded: one hundred members for English boroughs might be dismissed; and the British minister, fulfilling the wish of his father, might thus infuse into the veins of the constitution more pure blood than that which would be drawn out.

On the topic of absence, he remarked, that the want of constant residence would not prevent a man from attending to the interests of his property or his country; and, indeed, he did not find that the residence of great landholders on their estates proved so beneficial as many imagined. Besides, it ought to be considered, that all the improvements in Ireland had been introduced by individuals who had been temporary absentees. The capital, he allowed, would lose one source of traffic by the absence of the parliament; but increased habits of parsimony, and attention to general trade, would probably balance the loss.

The distance of the representatives from control had
been

been mentioned as an objection; but, he thought, they would be more liable to control; for, if they should accept places, they must vacate their seats, and there would always be some popular candidate at home, ready to supplant them. The distance in this case would be favorable to the people, by weakening the force of aristocratic influence in elections.

After other incidental remarks, he represented religious feuds as the most urgent causes of the necessity of an union. The popery of the present time, indeed, was an object of little terror, in comparison with its state in former ages; and it would gradually give way to the light of reason: but, in the mean time, the violence of dissension required the force of England to restrain it. By shutting out all hope of supremacy on one hand, and by allaying all fear of it on the other, a consolidation of the realms would promote a better spirit between the contending parties.

But, while he wished for an union, he did not altogether approve the plan now recommended. It would leave grounds of jealousy and altercation, and would not involve the complete identity of interest requisite for the stability of such a measure. He also thought it improper to urge the scheme, unless it should appear to be desired by the sober and impartial majority of the nation; and, while seventy boroughs were allowed to be saleable commodities, for which the public money was to be given, he not only deemed it impossible to collect the genuine sense of the nation in that house, but could not conscientiously support a scheme attended with this avowed corruption.

The two next speeches were those of Mr. MAC-CLELAND and Mr. TIGHE. The former ridiculed the idea of the present independence of Ireland; af-

firmed that national and commercial jealousies were necessarily incident to the existing connexion between the countries ; and recommended an union, as tending to combine real independence with wealth and prosperity. The latter accused lord Castlereagh of having argued upon two assumptions which he could not prove. One was, that the opinion of the nation was in favor of the measure ; the other, that Ireland could be adequately and fairly represented in an united parliament. According to Mr. Tighe, the sense of the nation was decidedly against the scheme ; and the absolute or virtual exclusion of the whole body of presbyterians, of a great portion of the gentry, the lawyers, and the merchants, would prevent the accomplishment of the second object. He also charged the unionists with having had recourse to the dishonorable arts of corruption and intimidation, in the prosecution of their unconstitutional scheme.

Mr. SMITH denied that the union would annihilate the liberties or the constitution of Ireland, and asserted that the greater part of the property and intelligence of the country justly considered the measure in an opposite point of view.

Mr. J. M. O'DONEL reprobated the scheme with great warmth, and inveighed against the apostates and traitors who aimed at the ruin of their country. Even the discussion of the question, he said, was highly insulting to the electors and disgraceful to the nation. No parliament, except one chosen for the purpose, could be competent to the decision.

This speaker took occasion to animadvert on the attorney-general's assertion, that Molyneux had recommended a legislative union. Having read that author's work ' with much care,' Mr. O'Donel declared, that

that it did not contain a sentence which could support such an assertion.

Mr. Serjeant STANLEY endeavoured to prove, that Ireland, far from surrendering her constitution on the accomplishment of an union, would acquire real independence and dignity; that the measure was necessary for ensuring the peace and prosperity of the country; and that the parliament was fully competent to its execution.

Mr. GRATTAN, though he had sufficiently evinced in the preceding debate his hostility to the union, now assailed it with undiminished vigor. Its chief advocate, he said, seemed to 'propose a counter-revolution, as if he were to bring in a bill to depose the house of Hanover, and re-establish that of Stuart: he proposed to restore the domination of the British parliament which abdicated Ireland, and to depose the Irish parliament that saved her; grounding the proposition on the opportunity, the weakness, the divisions, and the martial law of the country, but concealing those grounds because a disclosure of them would display the real character and perfidy of the measure, and professing to introduce it on another ground—namely, the wishes of the country, as mis-stated and misrepresented by the servants of the crown.' In this proposition, the minister had gigantic difficulties to encounter. It was incumbent upon him to explain away the tyrannical acts of a century; to apologise for the lawless and oppressive proceedings of England, for a system which had counteracted the kindness of Providence towards Ireland, and had kept her in a state of thralldom and misery; to prove that the British parliament had undergone a great change of disposition; to disprove two consequences which were portended by the odium of the union and the increased expences of the empire—

namely, a military government for a considerable time, and, at no very distant period, an augmentation of taxes; to deny or dispute the growth of the prosperity of Ireland under the maternal wing of her own parliament; to controvert the sufficiency of that legislature for imperial purposes or commercial objects, though facts were against him; and to explode or recall his repeated declarations in its favor. In short, he had to prove many points which he could by no means demonstrate, and to disprove many which might be forcibly maintained against him.

The minister's pretence was, that jacobinism grew out of the Irish constitution; but, said Mr. Grattan, it was a paradoxical idea, that democracy should grow from the king, or the house of lords, or the assembly of the commons, in which aristocracy had no small influence—that the excess should grow out of the temperament. Even if the popular branch of the constitution had been guilty of licentiousness and faction, that would be a very insufficient reason for destroying the whole or any integral part of the system. But, while the premier alleged the danger of jacobinism, his plan tended in some measure to counter-act his argument; for he favored democracy by treating the higher orders as incapable of legislating for their country.

In maintaining the competence of parliament to agree to an union, the advocates of the measure, in Mr. Grattan's opinion, had gone too far, as the assent to it would involve a surrender of the constitution; an act which, without the authority of the people, would be a breach of trust. 'Parliament,' he said, 'is not the proprietor, but the trustee; and the people the proprietor, not the property. Parliament is called to make laws, not to elect law-makers; it is in no branch a body

body of electors, but of delegates in one branch, assembled to exercise parliamentary functions, not to choose or substitute another parliament for the discharge of its own duty.' This, he added, was the doctrine of Hooker, Locke, and (by implication or analogy) of Grotius: it was also that of the convention of England at the time of the revolution; and the authority of Bolingbroke and of Junius might be adduced in its support. Mr. Pitt, however, thought differently, without assigning any reason for his opinion. 'He who denied the right of France to alter her government, maintains the omnipotence of the parliament of Ireland to annul her constitution.'

After some other remarks on the question of competence, Mr. Grattan affirmed, that the alleged object of the union, namely, the identification of the two nations, would not be secured by the plan. It would not produce an identity of people, establishments, revenue, commerce, or interests. The present constitution might be said to include nearly an equal trade and an equal liberty; but the union would be a tax and a drawback upon that trade and that liberty.—He then urged the very serious importance of the question. 'It is not now such as formerly occupied your attention—not old Poynings, not speculation, not an embargo, not a catholic bill, not a reform bill—it is your being—it is more, it is your life to come—whether you will go to the tomb of Charlemont and the volunteers, and erase his epitaph, or whether your children shall go to your graves, saying, "A venal, a military court attacked the liberties of the Irish, and here lie the bones of the honorable men who saved their country." Such an epitaph is a nobility which the king cannot give to his slaves; it is a glory which the crown cannot give to the king.'

A short

A short reply was made by Mr. CORRY to some of the observations which had occurred in the debate. He defended the competence of parliament by arguing, that in every constitution a power must subsist for the correction of the evils incident to human policy ; that this must be the supreme power of the state ; and that in our constitution the parliament had this remedial authority, because the exercise of it by the people at large was impracticable. That a social compact paramount to the constitution really existed, he did not believe ; and the propagators of such a notion, he said, ought to state when or by whom the agreement was adjusted, where it was deposited or recorded, and by what means and on what occasions it was to supersede the authority of parliament.—In the case of the Scottish union, he contended that no special authority had been given to the northern parliament, and that it was fully competent without it. He offered remarks, not very important, on other points of dispute.

Dr. DUIGENAN took a more comprehensive view of the subject. After treating of the natural connexion between Great-Britain and Ireland, he proceeded to a survey of the political connexion of the two realms, according to the settlement of the year 1782. Having mentioned some circumstances which militated against the independence of the Irish legislature under that arrangement, he treated the question respecting its intended finality as totally immaterial, and affirmed that the proper object of discussion was, whether it was such a settlement as tended to secure the perpetual connexion of the kingdoms. In his opinion, it was far from having that tendency. It involved various badges of dependence, and contained within itself ‘ a mine of combustibles, which, one day or other, would be sprung,’ to the ruin and desolation of the country.

Not

Not only on questions of imperial concern, but on points of commerce and ordinary intercourse, there were constant sources of discontent, animosity, and disunion. The existing connexion might rather be called a faithless truce, *infidæ induciæ*, than a state of harmony and peace. It was even weaker than a federal union, as it had no general or common assembly to support it; and it could never be maintained but by the decided superiority of one of the states in strength and opulence; a superiority which would not prevent the frequent and violent struggles of the other state. The imperfection of this settlement rendering new arrangements necessary, an incorporating union, he said, was the most advisable of all measures. That such a procedure would destroy that degree of independence which Ireland now enjoyed, he could not admit; for she would enjoy equal independence with Great-Britain; both countries would form one consolidated independent empire. That the superior number of British members in the imperial parliament, though it might give them the power of oppressing Ireland, would ever be so employed, he could not prevail upon himself to believe, as acts of that kind would not only be repugnant to justice but inconsistent with the interests of those who should thus violate the terms of the union. The opinion of Mr. Foster, that the trade of Ireland would not be augmented by an union, he also controverted. He denied that any injury would arise from the increase of absentees, except such as would be much more than compensated by the numerous advantages which might be expected from the scheme. He then examined the objection to the competency of the parliament, and pronounced it invalid. After other discussions, he deprecated a rejection which might encourage

rage the views of jacobin traitors, and ruin the country; and he strongly urged the adoption of the measure, as the sure pledge of national happiness, prosperity, and security.

Mr. SAURIN asserted the existence of a compact between the government and the people. It was to be found, he said, in the heart of every honest senator; and he trusted that every member would reflect on the duties involved in such a compact before he should give his vote on the present question. The functions and authority of parliament ought not to be transferred to another country, without the sanction of a full and ascertained majority of the people. The trustees of power had no right of themselves to destroy that which they were delegated to preserve.

Colonel Fitzgerald supported the competence of parliament to the enactment of an union, and referred to English history for an exemplification of the advantages of such a measure; and other gentlemen argued on the same side before the wearied members called for a division.

The number of ministerial votes proved on this occasion to be 158, and the suffrages of the anti-unionists amounted to 115. In returning from the house to their respective homes, some of the members were insulted by the populace for supporting the union; but no mischief ensued. The dread of personal injury, however, induced the courtiers to apply to the vice-roy for protection; and, at the next meeting, a body of cavalry appeared for the preservation of peace and order, to the great disgust of the enemies of military government.

CHAP. X.

Proceedings in the Irish House of Peers.

IF we consider the number of placemen and other influenced members, who voted at the last division, the cabinet had little cause for real or honorable triumph, as the majority could not be deemed sufficient to give full sanction to the scheme in a moral or conscientious point of view. Though we are friendly to the measure itself, we cannot applaud the perseverance of those who resolved to carry it into effect against the sense of the independent part of the house of commons ; for, of the opposition of a real majority of uninfluenced senators, no doubt could be entertained by any man of sense or reflexion, who knew the predicament and constitution of that assembly. The court, however, satisfied with the late majority, eagerly prosecuted the scheme ; and the lord-chancellor Clare was requested to recommend it to the peers with all the force of his manly eloquence.

The earl, having studied the subject with great attention, prepared to submit it to the house (on the 10th of February) ‘in all its various and important views and bearings.’ From a close observation of what had passed in Ireland for the last twenty years, he was satisfied in his judgement and conscience that the existence of her independent parliament had gradually led to her recent complicated and bitter calamities, and that nothing but an incorporative union with Great-Britain could save the sister realm from ruin. In every
communi-

communication which he had had with the king's ministers on Irish affairs for the last seven years, he had uniformly and distinctly enforced the necessity of such a measure, as the last resource for securing Ireland to the British crown. His persuasions, however, were fruitless, till the late rebellion roused British ministers and the British nation to a sense of their common danger.

From these introductory remarks he proceeded to trace the connexion which had subsisted for more than six centuries between Ireland and England. He did not think it necessary to inquire whether it originated in conquest, as English lawyers and historians had confidently affirmed, or, as the Irish asserted with equal confidence, in a federal compact of some of their chiefs with the king of England. But it seemed to him indisputable, that, before the connexion, Ireland never enjoyed a state of domestic security, or a government or constitution capable of shielding her inhabitants from injury in their persons or property. It might be supposed that the conquest of the country was the object of the English monarch, but that his embarrassments on the continent disabled him from effecting it, the first English settlements in the island having been merely colonial. During several reigns the colony was left to thrive by its own strength and resources, with no other reinforcement than the occasional arrival of new British adventurers. For some centuries the English pale was not pushed beyond its original limits; and, in the reign of the eighth Henry, it did not comprehend above four shires. It was the early policy of the English government to discourage all connexion of the colony with the native Irish; and the statute of Kilkenny enacted rigorous prohibitions of marriage,

marriage, intercourse, or communion of law between them. This act was a declaration of war, not only against the Irish, but against every person of English blood who had settled beyond the limits of the pale and had adopted any of the laws or customs of the natives. It produced, as might have been expected, a long course of complicated contention and promiscuous warfare; and, as Ireland was in this convulsed state when the attempt was first made to promulgate the English statute law in that country, it was not surprising that the attempt should prove abortive. Under the auspices of Henry, a formal treaty was made with the earl of Desmond, for his permission that the English law should be executed in his territories; and other chiefs agreed to admit the king's judges, on condition of their observance of the Irish law. Perhaps, if these or any other officers of the crown had been suffered to use their endeavours in composing the feuds and animosities of the Irish tribes and powerful lords of English blood, the turbulence of the Hibernian nation might gradually have subsided, and acquiesced in the establishment of a rational and civilised government; but, unfortunately, there arose at that time a new schism, which proved the 'bane and pestilence of Ireland, and rendered her a blank among the nations of Europe.'

While the reformed religion recommended itself to the English, and some other nations as the result of inquiry and conviction, its light did not shine upon the Irish, who, 'enveloped in dark and impenetrable ignorance, continued blindly devoted to the superstitious errors of the Romish faith.' Sunk as they were below the reach of curiosity or speculation, it was hopeless and impolitic to call upon them at once to exchange the

the religion of their ancestors for new doctrines which they could not understand. Henry, indeed, did not insist on their compliance with the reformed system; but, under his son Edward, orders were issued for stripping the churches of the ensigns of superstition, and for enforcing the use of the English liturgy. In the reign of Mary, popery again triumphed; but, in that of Elizabeth, a submission to the protestant creed was commanded under severe penalties. Such impolitic violence had no other effect than to promote a general disaffection to the English government. As Philip II. of Spain endeavoured, by partial invasions of Ireland, to take advantage of this disaffection, Elizabeth became sensible of the danger of losing all authority in that country, and therefore sent over a considerable army, which nearly achieved the reduction of the island. James I. soon completed the conquest; and under his sway the English laws were universally acknowledged. Before the accession of that prince, Ireland had no regular government or statutory constitution; and it was he who laid the foundation of the present establishments in church and state. On the introduction of the protestant colony in his reign, the old distinctions of native Irish and degenerate English, and English of blood and English of birth, were consigned to oblivion; and the schism of protestant and papist, which the reformation had introduced, operated as a permanent ground of contest. The new colonists were deemed aggressors and enemies; and the religion which they abhorred became, to their adversaries, a common bond of union, and an hereditary pledge of animosity to the British nation. Thus, in the modern revolutionary phrase, the physical consequence of the country was arrayed against the English colony and the

the English government. James was therefore reduced to the necessity of treating the old inhabitants as a conquered people, and governing their country as an English province, or of fortifying his protestant colony by investing it with the artificial power of a separate government, which, on every principle of self-interest and self-preservation, it was bound to administer in concert with England. The executive departments being placed under the immediate control of the ordinary royal prerogative, he also deemed it expedient to secure a majority of the parliament, by the grant of new elective franchises; but, though he succeeded in this respect, the sessions were marked by the bitterness of animosity, which, however, was allayed in the following reign by the 'steady government of Strafford.' On the removal of that nobleman, the old inhabitants, taking advantage of the weakness and distraction of the government, broke out into open rebellion, in which they were joined by a great number of the colonists, all insurgents being at length subdued by Cromwell, he transplanted the descendants of the original natives into the province of Connaught, and gave their lands, as well as the possessions of those colonists who had opposed the English parliament, to his soldiers and other partisans, who formed a colony of dissenters of every description. 'Of these men (said the chancellor) I speak with great personal respect, when I state that a very considerable portion of the opulence and power of Ireland centres at this day in the descendants of this motley collection of English adventurers.' The interests of these suppressors of a dangerous rebellion were not overlooked by Charles II., with whom Monk probably adjusted terms in their behalf; but, though their success re-

dounded essentially to the advantage of the British empire, they were too highly favored by the act of settlement, by which 7,800,000 acres of land were assigned to some of them, or confirmed to others, with a very small reserve to the catholic claimants. The latter not meeting with success in their efforts for the restoration of James II., the slender reliques of their property became the subject of renewed confiscation, which introduced into Ireland a new set of adventurers.

‘ It is a very curious and important speculation (the earl added) to look back to the forfeitures of Ireland incurred in the last century. The superficial contents of the island are calculated at 11,042,682 acres. Let us now examine the state of forfeitures.

| | | |
|--|-----|-------------------|
| ‘ In the reign of James I. the whole of the province of Ulster was confiscated, containing | | 2,836,837 acres. |
| Set out by the court of claims at | } | 7,800,000 |
| the Restoration | | |
| Forfeitures of 1688 | - - | 1,060,792 |
| Total | | <u>11,697,629</u> |

‘ So that the whole of your island has been confiscated, with the exception of the estates of five or six old families of English blood; and no inconsiderable portion has been confiscated twice, or perhaps thrice, in the course of a century.’

Thus, he continued, three sets of English adventurers, who poured into Ireland at the termination of three rebellions, had engrossed the power and acquired nearly the whole property of the country. Confiscation was their common title; and from their first settlement they were ‘hemmed in on every side by the old inhabitants of the island, brooding over their discontent/s

tents in sullen indignation.' The only security, therefore, for their physical existence, was the powerful and commanding protection of Great-Britain. The necessity of this connexion, however, did not prevent the parliament from entering into occasional disputes with the legislature by which it was protected; but the colonial leaders were too prudent to risque a total rupture; and, in the year 1707, both houses became so sensible of the expediency of union, as to recommend to queen Anne an incorporation of the realms. Her ministers, satisfied with the Scottish union, did not adopt the proposal of another; and successive governors found means, in her reign and under the sway of the two first princes of the house of Hanover, to retain Ireland in subjection without attempting to carry the scheme into effect. In those reigns considerable improvements were made by the inhabitants of that kingdom in the useful arts, and the commerce of the country was gradually extended. At the same time the political consequence of the parliament increased; and, in the present reign, the leaders resolved to take the first opportunity of demanding a free trade and an independent constitution. During the American war, a volunteer army was arrayed; and, in the hour of danger and calamity, Great-Britain was constrained to acquiesce in the claims of Ireland. While the chancellor complimented the volunteers for their forbearance of outrage, and for their exertions in maintaining the internal peace of the country, he said that he should never cease to consider, as dangerous and ill-judged in the extreme, the appeals made to that army by the angry politicians of the day, or to think 'that they established a precedent for rebellion, which has since been followed up with full success.'

The opinion, that 'what passed at that period was acknowledged in both countries to be a *final adjustment* of all political claims and controversies between them, and a *full security* for their constitutional connexion,' was combated by his lordship with force and effect. If it were, he said, such an adjustment and security, it was achieved with a rapidity unexampled, and by the most extraordinary means that had ever attended an adjustment of any kind between two independent countries. 'The history of this adjustment lately given in the name of the gentleman who is styled the father of it, is——' that it emanated from the armed convention assembled at Dungannon, was approved at county meetings of the people armed and unarmed, and was sanctioned and registered by the Irish parliament." If this history of our boasted constitution be well founded, I have no scruple to declare, that we cannot too soon get rid of it. We may very probably, if this be true, have a new armed convention, assembled at Wexford or at Naas, and a new constitutional emanation from it, of a government composed of a directory and two councils, or of a consulate and tribunate and conservative senate ; which, I doubt not, some future house of commons may sanction and register in either form.'

The earl then stated the true history of this adjustment. On the 16th of April, 1782, in answer to a royal message relative to the state of Ireland, an address was proposed in the house of commons, promising an inquiry into the causes of the prevailing discontent ; but, from the ardor of those who could not brook delay, an amendment was quickly voted, containing 'the whole of this final adjustment on the part of Ireland.' On the 6th of May, the duke of Portland,

land, then viceroy, advised the British ministry to make the desired concessions, and mentioned the readiness of the Irish parliament to settle by negotiation 'the precise limits of the independence required, the consideration which should be given for the protection expected, and the proportion which it would be proper to contribute towards the general support of the empire.' On the faith of this representation, the British parliament voted, on the 17th of May, that the obnoxious act of the 6th year of George I. should be repealed; and, not considering this as a final adjustment, declared that it was indispensably necessary for the interest and happiness of both kingdoms to establish the connexion on a solid and permanent basis. For this purpose, a regular treaty was proposed; and the duke of Portland and his associates considered it as being in a fair train of settlement. But 'this bright prospect of peace and happiness was soon clouded;' for, before the end of June, the lord-lieutenant complained, in an official letter, of an 'unexpected change' in those dispositions which had authorised him to entertain the hope of a solid connexion, and declared it to be his opinion, that any attempt to conciliate the minds of the Irish nation to the measure of which he had intimated the hope, would at that moment be 'delusive and impossible.' For this change the earl thus accounts. 'Mr. Flood had started his political curiosity of simple repeal. In the interval between the time of promised support of a treaty for final imperial adjustment, and this sudden change of disposition of which the duke of Portland had so much reason to complain, he had contrived to turn the tide of popular clamor against his political rivals; and they were alarmed, lest, in the discussion of the treaty, he might play the game against

them, which they played in 1785 against the Irish nation ; by mis-stating and misrepresenting it, as a surrender of Irish dignity and independence, and an insidious reclamation by the British cabinet of the legislative authority of the British parliament. And thus were the peace and happiness of ages, the clear interests of Great-Britain and Ireland, and their lasting connexion, sacrificed to the timidity and jealousy of the patriot statesmen of 1782, or rather to their corrupt love of a flimsy and precarious popularity. Let them have grace now to hide their heads, and not to talk of *final adjustment*.'

Before he dismissed this part of the subject, his lordship quoted Mr. Grattan's description of the Irish house of commons, the sponsors of the finality of the adjustment, and animadverted on that gentleman's acceptance of 50,000*l.* from an assembly which he had styled ' a regal pandæmonium.' He then referred to a declaration of Mr. Fox (in 1785), asserting the necessity of making some regulations between Great-Britain and Ireland, tending to replace that power of which the Irish, in their struggles for independence, had imprudently insisted on the abolition ; a power which had been sometimes called commercial, at other times external, and frequently imperial legislation. Some succedaneum, Mr. Fox thought, should be found for that power, as, ' without one general super-intending authority, to embrace the whole system of the navigation of the empire,' much inconvenience and confusion would take place.

' Here,' said the chancellor, ' are damning proofs of the falsehood of the assertion, that the transactions which passed in 1782 were considered as final between Great-Britain and Ireland.' But, even if the adjustment

ment had been deemed final by both countries; will sound policy or common sense preclude a revision of it, when practice and experience have proved that it has sown the seeds of ceaseless contention and periodical rebellion ?'

To prove that the existing connexion was adverse to real concord and harmony, he said, ' Waving for a moment the dignity and independence of imperial Ireland, let me see how her government in its present state of connexion with Great-Britain must be administered. We admit the dependence of the crown of Ireland upon the crown of Great-Britain ; but there is a distinct parliament in each country, exercising all legislative functions without restriction. The unity and dependence of our executive are unquestioned ; but all legislative authority in either country is denied to the other, not only in municipal regulations, but in every branch of imperial policy, whether of trade and navigation, of peace and war, of revenue, or of the executive government, when it may happen to be committed to a regency. Between two countries equal in power, such a connexion could not subsist for one hour ; and therefore its existence must depend upon the admitted inferiority and marked subordination of one of them. Ireland is that inferior country ; and call her constitution independent or dignified, or by any other high-sounding title in the Irish vocabulary, hers must be a provincial government, and of the worst description ; a government maintained, not by the avowed exercise of legitimate authority, but by a permanent and commanding influence of the English executive in the councils of Ireland, as a necessary substitute for it. In the present state of connexion between Great-Britain and Ireland there can be no other

bond of their union. If there be not an implicit concurrence by Ireland in every imperial act of the crown which has the sanction of the British parliament, and in every article of British legislation upon imperial subjects, there is an end of your connexion with the British nation; and I repeat, that the only security which can exist for this national concurrence, is a permanent and commanding influence of the English executive, or rather of the English cabinet, in the councils of Ireland. Such a connexion is formed, not for mutual strength and security, but for mutual debility; it is a connexion of distinct minds and distinct interests, generating national discontent and jealousy, and perpetuating faction and misgovernment in the inferior country. The first obvious disadvantage to Ireland is, that, in every department of the state, every other consideration must yield to parliamentary power: let the misconduct of any public officer be what it may, if he is supported by a powerful parliamentary interest, he is too strong for the king's representative. A majority in the parliament of Great-Britain will defeat the minister of the day; but a majority of the parliament of Ireland against the king's government tends directly to a separation of this kingdom from the British crown. If it continues, separation or war is the inevitable issue; and therefore it is, that the general executive of the empire, so far as is essential to retain Ireland as a member of it, is completely at the mercy of the Irish parliament: and it is vain to expect, so long as man continues to be a creature of passion and interest, that he will not avail himself of the critical and difficult situation in which the executive government of this kingdom must ever remain under its present constitution, to demand the favors of the crown,

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not as the reward of loyalty and service, but as the stipulated price, to be paid in advance, for the discharge of a public duty. Every unprincipled and noisy adventurer, who can achieve the means of putting himself forward, commences his political career on an avowed speculation of profit and loss ; and, if he fails to negotiate his political job, will endeavour to extort it by faction and sedition, and with unblushing effrontery to fasten his own corruption on the king's ministers. English influence is the inexhaustible theme for popular irritation and distrust, of every factious and discontented man who fails in the struggle to make himself the necessary instrument of it.'

In support of his remark on the tendency of the present connexion to the production of periodical hostility or rebellion, the earl stated, that some gentlemen who had been in the habit of considering the Irish nation as their political inheritance, resolved, on the acknowledgement of the independence of the realm in 1782, to make it a 'muniment of their title, by forming a political confederacy, offensive and defensive, in both countries;' that the basis of this alliance was, 'a mutual engagement to play the independence of Ireland against their political antagonists whenever they happened to occupy the seat of power,' and, apparently, to foment turbulence and faction in that kingdom even to open rebellion, if it should be found necessary to the removal of an obnoxious British administration ; that it was an essential object of the confederacy to guard against any settlement which might cut off the most obvious sources of mutual jealousy ; and that, with this view, the commercial propositions of the year 1785 were opposed and baffled, on pretence of their militating in some instances against the recently-acquired freedom of constitution.

constitution. Thus, he said, ' the solid interests of Britain and Ireland, and the fair foundation of their permanent connexion, were sacrificed on the altar of faction ; and, in less than three years from the period of boasted final adjustment, did Ireland come to a breach with the British nation on the important imperial question of trade and navigation. Within the next four years a new imperial question arose, the most critical and important which could have come into discussion ; a question of the identity of the executive power ; and here again Ireland came to a breach with the British nation, marked by virulent hostility.' The proceedings of the Hibernian parliament on this question he stigmatised as indecorously precipitate, and unwarranted by law : he mentioned the dispute between the lord-lieutenant (the marquis of Buckingham) and the two houses, with a compliment to the propriety of his conduct ; and affirmed, that for several weeks the authority of the British crown was not acknowledged in Ireland.

' The authors of this enormity (says the chancellor) assert, in extenuation of their conduct, that their choice fell upon the same personage whom it was known the British parliament would, of necessity, look to in the existing emergency ; but, if Ireland has a choice of her regency during any fortuitous incapacity attached to the crown, that choice may fall hereafter on a French or an Irish consul ; and, when we look at the further extravagances of the house of commons in 1789, it is by no means an impossible event. The supplies for that year had been voted in committee for the ordinary period, to the 25th of March, 1790 ; but, before the report of the committees of supply and ways and means, his majesty's recovery was announced ;

nounced: the mutiny bill had also been agreed to in the committee for the ordinary term of one year; and what were the offerings of duty by the Irish commons to greet their sovereign on his recovery? A stinted bill of supply, and a stinted mutiny bill. So long as the self-created government considered itself established, the chiefs who composed it were willing to accept the supplies and maintain the army; but the moment they found their sovereign restored to his people, they stinted the supply to two months, and the mutiny bill to the same period; and this was done by the house of commons, in consequence of the king's recovery: the resolutions of the committee of supply were altered, as was the mutiny bill, on the report, for the avowed purpose of controlling the crown in the just exercise of its vital prerogatives. Let the people of Ireland, who are taught to look with abhorrence on the parliament of Great-Britain, contrast this proceeding with the conduct of the house of commons, on the change which took place in the administration in 1783. The ministers who had been removed from office had a decided majority in the house of commons. Was any man found in the British parliament to make a proposition to withhold or stint the supplies? No.—In the warmth of political animosity, the commons of Great-Britain felt their paramount duty to the British nation. In Ireland, the peace and honor of the kingdom were sacrificed, without feeling or remorse, to vindictive ambition and rapacity; and, to the scandal and disgrace of the Irish nation, the authors of these enormities long escaped public and general reprobation; but the influence of the Irish precedent on our connexion with the British crown never can be repaired, and, when looked to in the full extent of its mischief, ought to make

make every sober man in the community shudder for his safety under the existing constitution. The bond of union, if it exists, arises from two Irish statutes—the act of annexation of Henry VIII., and the act of recognition of William and Mary; one an act of the colonial parliament, the other an act of the borough parliament. Is it even an improbable event, that, in some future convulsion of party, the house of commons may be persuaded to think, as the city of Dublin has been tutored, that the dependence of our executive on the British crown is the worst condition of slavery;—"that, in the legislative usurpation of the British parliament, the greatness of the tyrant qualified the condition of the slave, but that, by their dependence on the British crown, the people are prostrate to the legislative usurpation of another body—a British cabinet, an humiliated and a tame tyrant?" And is it an improbable event, that, to shake off this tyranny, a bill of repeal of the acts of annexation and recognition, making a distinct settlement of the Irish crown on the house of Hanover, may come up to this house in a future parliament, attended by a stinted bill of supply and a stinted mutiny bill? Every argument in favor of Irish dignity and independence, which prevailed in the appointment of an Irish regency in 1789, will apply with equal force to a distinct settlement of the Irish crown; and the objection of separation will be answered by the Irish settlement of the crown upon the august and illustrious house of the British monarch. If it should be said, that the good sense and discretion of any future house of commons will afford full protection against such an extravagance, I will answer, that the precedent of 1789 has taught me to appreciate the security. I make no scruple to avow, that, when
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I look back to the events of the last twenty years, I should feel most happy to commit my country to the sober discretion of the British parliament, even though we had not a single representative in it. Let the people of Great-Britain be taught to understand the solid interests of Ireland, and I have no fear that they will not attend to them.'

Referring to the gentlemen whom he had before mentioned as factiously interfering in the government of Ireland, the earl took notice of a new constitutional project which they brought forward after the king's recovery. It related to the internal reform of the house of commons, by an exclusion of pensioners and by other means. To effect this object, a whig club was announced; and, in this society, some men of high rank joined with the refuse of the community. Unfortunately for the cause of discontent, the servants of the crown in both countries out-bade the members of that club in concession, and several popular bills were adopted. Grievances now seemed likely to fail: but an improvement was soon made on the whig institution, by a society of united Irishmen, to whom 'we are indebted for the modern essentials of liberty, parliamentary reform and catholic emancipation; topics first invented for rebellion, and since warmly taken up by some gentlemen who have contrived to identify their principles with the cause, without exposing their persons to the dangers, of treason.'

On the question of parliamentary reform, he merely stated the plan which was submitted to the house of commons in the session of 1797, for the division of the realm into elective districts, the great augmentation of the number of electors, the exclusion of placemen and pensioners,

pensioners, and the frequency of new parliaments. This plan, he said, required no comment.

With regard to the affairs of the catholics, he admitted the propriety of repealing such laws as cut off the majority of the nation from the rights of property ; but, in the relaxation of these laws, a fatal error, he thought, was committed. The business ought to have been taken up systematically by the ministers of the crown, and not left in the hands of ambitious and intriguing men. However, before the subject attracted the notice of the former, the offensive laws were abrogated or relaxed. The members of the whig club did not then declaim in favor of the papists ; but, when the ministry undertook the affair, those who had formerly persecuted the catholics ‘ became apostles of emancipation, and would not be left behind in the race for popularity.’ The papists would have remained content with the favors which they had received ; or, if they looked to ulterior indulgence, they were willing to try the effects of time, temper, and negotiation : but, on a change of the Irish government in 1795, the name and authority of earl Fitzwilliam were abused to force their sect to come forward as the engine of faction, and demand the repeal of every law by which they were excluded from political power. Catholic emancipation was the cry ; but it was a mere cover for bad designs. ‘ It was originally,’ in the words of the chancellor, ‘ a pretence for rebellion, and is now a powerful engine of faction, wielded in both countries against the peace and happiness of Ireland ; an engine which has already shaken your government to its foundation, and cannot fail to level it with the dust, if we are to continue in a state of separation from the British nation.

nation. It is the common topic of discontent and irritation to rally the old inhabitants of this island to the standard of faction in both countries; a topic which in its nature will remain an inexhaustible source of popular ferment in Ireland. If you repeal your test laws, and acts of supremacy and uniformity, the rich establishments of the protestant church remain a prominent object of attack to the apostles of emancipation: if you make partition of your church establishments with the popish clergy, they may demand a formal recognition of the laws of their church; and, when every other point has been yielded, an apostle of sedition, in the fullness of human arrogance and presumption, may even propose a repeal of God's holy commandment, and proclaim the worship of graven images in your streets and highways. What is the lesson of peace and good-will inculcated by the successors of the worthy gentlemen who first invented this revolutionary weapon? "Let me advise you by no means to postpone the consideration of your fortunes until after the war: seize the opportunity of war for fraternal embraces, and great emancipation: your physical consequence exists only in a state of separation from England; in a state of separation you are four to one, in a state of union merely one to four: and therefore, though your claims should be attended to after union, you gain nothing; you may as well be units in the street as units in parliament." The whole of the interior mechanism of emancipation is here fairly exposed to view; and I wish every honest member of the community, whether he be protestant or catholic, who regards the blessings of social order, and wishes to transmit them to his posterity, to view it with sober attention, and to decide for himself, whether,

ther, in the hands of its Irish patrons, it points to any other object than jacobinism and revolution. I wish every honest member of the community, protestant or catholic, to decide for himself, whether Ireland can ever be at peace until this firebrand is extinguished, and whether a hope exists that it can be extinguished, in our present state of separation from England. If the catholics of Ireland are not satisfied with the indulgence which they have already experienced, and are determined to press their demands of an unqualified repeal of the test laws and act of supremacy, let them be discussed upon their solid merits in the imperial parliament, where the question will not be influenced by passion and prejudice ; where no part of the consideration will be, that the catholics of Ireland may retain their physical consequence for the establishment of a system of periodical rebellion, under the management and direction of whigs or tories, or united Irishmen, and where it will be gravely and dispassionately considered, whether a repeal of these laws may be yielded with safety to the British monarchy, or whether, by adopting the French model, in abolishing all religious distinctions as connected with the state, we shall lay the corner-stone of revolution and democracy. My unaltered opinion is, that, so long as human nature and the popish religion continue to be what I know they are, a conscientious popish ecclesiastic never will become a well-attached subject to a protestant state, and that the popish clergy must always have a commanding influence on every member of that communion. I put this as an abstract state-maxim, without regard to the peculiar situation of this country. In private life I never inquired into the religion of any man ; if he be honest and a good Christian,

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It matters not to me that he may subscribe to articles of faith and discipline which my reason and understanding reject: but, when I am to frame laws for the safety of the state, I do not feel myself at liberty to act upon the virtues of individuals. Laws must be framed to meet and counteract the vicious propensities of human nature.'

This orator then touched on the late rebellion in Ireland, arising from the sources which he had mentioned. He maintained, that the treasonable conspiracies which had brought that country to the verge of ruin, were the natural offspring of the adjustment of 1782, and that the convulsion in 1789 gave birth to the whig institution, the reliques of which might be observed in the mask of liberty, inculcating the principles, and adopting the means originally devised by the rebel confederacy of the Irish union, to abolish the religion and subvert the monarchy of Ireland. He made some other remarks on the conduct of the pretended patrons of liberty, and on the great danger to which their intrigues exposed their countrymen.

'I will now appeal (he added) to every dispassionate man who hears me, whether I have in any thing misstated or exaggerated the calamitous situation of my country, or that coalition of vice and folly which has long undermined her happiness, and at this hour loudly threatens her existence. It is gravely inculcated, I know, "Let the British minister leave us to ourselves: we are very well as we are." We are very well as we are! Gracious God! of what materials must the heart of that man be composed, who knows the state of this country, and will coldly tell us that we are very well as we are? We are very well as

we are ! We have not three years of redemption from bankruptcy or intolerable taxation, or one hour's security against the renewal of exterminating civil war. We are very well as we are ! Look to your statute-book ; session after session have you been compelled to enact laws of unexampled rigor and novelty, to repress the horrible excesses of the mass of your people ; and the fury of murder, of pillage, and of desolation, has so outrun all legislative exertion, that you have been at length driven to the hard necessity of breaking down the pale of the municipal law, and putting your country under the ban of military government ; and, in every little circle of dignity and independence, we hear whispers of discontent at the temperate discretion with which it is administered. We are very well as we are ! Look at the old revolutionary government of the Irish union, and the modern revolutionary government of the Irish consulate, canvassing the dregs of that rebel democracy, for a renewal of popular ferment and outrage, to overawe the deliberations of parliament. We are very well as we are ! Look to your civil and religious dissensions ; look to the fury of political faction, and the torrents of human blood that stain the face of your country ; and of what materials is that man composed, who will not listen with patience and good-will to any proposition that can be made to him, for composing the distractions, healing the wounds, and alleviating the miseries of this devoted nation ?

To prove the financial embarrassments of Ireland, he mentioned the progressive amount of her debt, for the last nine years. At the beginning of 1791 it did not exceed 2,442,890 pounds ; in 1795, it amounted to 4,335,990 pounds ; in 1799, it was augmented nearly

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to seventeen millions and a half by the expences attendant on the rebellion and the French invasion; and, at the time of his speaking, it was 25,662,640 pounds. If the present scale of expenditure should be continued for three years, it would be necessary, he said, to raise a revenue of 2,430,000 pounds for the mere payment of the interest of the public debt; and, if the revenue should, in each of those years, be as high as two millions and a half, there would not remain above 70,000 pounds, at the end of that term, for the whole of the establishments civil and military. For defraying the increased charges of government, an additional revenue of more than one million, he thought, could not be raised without a tax on land or on income, or both; and either of these imposts, it must be considered, would diminish in a great proportion the customs and excise. He had allowed a loan of above eight millions for each of the three next years; and, if recourse should afterwards be had to annual loans for the purpose of supplying the deficiency of the revenue, he deemed bankruptcy inevitable. These financial difficulties did not appear to him to arise from a French, a Dutch, or a Spanish war, but from a war of faction, a whig war, and a war of united Irishmen.' Even if Great-Britain should no longer be at war, the rulers of Ireland would be compelled, he said, to maintain a war establishment for defence against their own people.

'It has been demanded triumphantly, how are we to be relieved by union? I answer, first, we are to be relieved from British and Irish faction, which is the prime source of all our calamities. Next, if we become one people with England, the army of the empire will be employed where it is most wanted for general service; and so long as it is found necessary to garri-

son every district in Ireland, for the internal safety of the country, the necessary force may be stationed here, without incurring additional expence in either country. In time of war, therefore, we may hope to be relieved from the separate expence entailed upon Ireland by domestic factions ; and, in peace, it matters not to the general service of the empire where the army may be quartered. Again—by union the resources of Ireland must necessarily increase ;—if we have but grace to remain in a state of tranquillity for a few years, I have no doubt that our resources would augment most rapidly ;—if we have but grace to abjure faction, I feel sanguine hope, on the restoration of peace, that Ireland will participate in British capital and British industry ; and until we can find employment for the poor, and teach them to feel and value the comforts of life, it is vain to expect that they will be reclaimed from barbarism. If you do not qualify the mass of your people for the enjoyment of sober liberty, you will never teach them to appreciate the blessings of it. Every man who feels for human misery must lament the hard necessity imposed upon the Irish government of meeting popular excess by laws of exemplary severity, and will contribute his best exertions to rescue the unfortunate victims of delusion from the depth of misfortune, to which they will ever be condemned so long as they are made the instruments of faction, and stimulated to acts of outrage by wicked and inflammatory appeals to their ignorance and inciviliation. But it is said, that, by giving up a separate government and separate parliament, we sacrifice national dignity and independence. If gentlemen who enlarge on this theme will talk of their personal dignity and aggrandisement, I can understand them ; but when I look at the squalid misery, and profound ignorance,
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and barbarous manners, and brutal ferocity, of the mass of the Irish people, I am sickened with this rant of Irish dignity and independence. Are the dignity and independence of Ireland to consist in the continued depression and unredeemed barbarism of the great majority of the people, and the factious contentions of a puny and rapacious oligarchy, who consider the Irish nation as their political inheritance, and are ready to sacrifice the public peace and happiness to their insatiate love of patronage and power? I hope I feel as becomes a true Irishman for the dignity and independence of my country; and therefore I would elevate her to her proper station in the rank of civilised nations. I wish to advance her from the degraded post of a mercenary province to the proud station of an integral and governing member of the greatest empire in the world. I wish to withdraw the higher orders of my countrymen from the narrow and corrupted sphere of Irish politics, and to direct their attention to objects of national importance, to teach them to improve the natural energies and extend the resources of their country, to encourage the skill and ingenuity of manufacturers, open useful channels for commercial enterprise, and, above all, seriously to exert their best endeavours to tame and civilise the lower orders of the people, to inculcate in their minds habits of religion and morality, and industry, and due subordination, to relieve their wants, and correct their excesses. Unless you will civilise your people, it is vain to look for national tranquillity or contentment.'

To the objection, that the measure of union was unseasonable, a reply was given in these terms: 'Are we to await the period of actual bankruptcy, or the issue of a new rebellion, that Great-Britain may be enabled to dictate to us the terms on which she will listen

to the proposition? This is a period of all others the most auspicious for Ireland to set on foot such a treaty. The late rebellion has been so far put down, that we are enabled to treat on fair and equal terms: the recollection of general peril arising from Irish treason is fresh in the memory of the British nation, and has taught that sober people the necessity of yielding their ancient prejudices to the general security of the empire.'

The allegation, that by a legislative union Ireland would be extinguished, was, he said; 'a species of political arithmetic of the peculiar growth of Ireland;' for, if two and three make up the gross number of five, how could it be said that two are extinguished? As well might it be alleged, that a smaller subscription in a commercial house would be extinguished in the larger share of the capital, and that the inferior partner would not derive a due proportion of the emoluments accruing from the trade. 'How is Ireland extinguished in this national partnership? The advantage clearly lies with the weaker partner, who will feel every benefit arising from the superior wealth, skill, and power, of the great political house, and share her full dividend of the joint profits.'

The earl's commercial statements do not require any specification, as that subject was more fully discussed by lord Castlereagh. Passing to the objection, that an union would drive the Irish nobility and gentry from their own country, and particularly impoverish the metropolis, he spoke with animation and force. 'With respect to emigration, look to the number of Irish emigrants who now crowd every village in Great Britain, and have been driven to seek an asylum there from the brutal fury of the Irish people, and the cold-blooded

blooded treachery of their own domestics, palpably fomented and encouraged by Irish faction and Irish treason : and let any dispassionate man say, whether the evil of emigration can ever be greater than it is at this day. If we are to live in a perpetual storm here ; if it is to remain at the discretion of every adventurer, of feeble and ostentatious talents, ungoverned by a particle of judgment or discretion, to dress up fictitious grievances for popular delusion, and let loose a savage and barbarous people upon the property and respect of the Irish nation, what gentleman, who has the means of living out of this country, will be induced to remain in it ? I do most solemnly declare, that no earthly consideration short of a strong sense of duty should have induced me to remain an eye-witness of the scenes of folly and madness, and horrors of every description, in which I have lived for some years past ; and that I would rather give up every prospect which remains to me in this country, and begin a new course in my old age, than submit to the same misery and disgust for the remnant of my life. If you wish to stop emigration, you must enable sober and rational men to live in peace at home. If they are allowed to return in security, I have no apprehension that the want of an annual procession from College-Green to Dublin-Castle, and a failure in the daily supply of venom and scurrility in the metropolis, will drive your nobility and gentry from their native country. And, as to the local interests of the city of Dublin, is it not extreme folly to suppose, if there be an influx of wealth into the country, that its fair proportion will not find its way to the capital ? The same fears alarmed the citizens of Edinburgh ; and it is notorious, that the wealth and population of that city have increased most rapidly since the Scotch union.

union. But if the apprehensions entertained for the local prosperity of Dublin were palpably well founded, are we to sacrifice the peace and happiness of the kingdom of Ireland, and the strength of the British empire, to the narrow and interested views of the merchants and traders of the metropolis ?

That the arguments in favor of an union might be strengthened, he desired his countrymen to consider what had passed in Ireland since the measure was first proposed for discussion. It was brought forward at a time when the effects of a formidable and bloody rebellion were recent ; when the machinations of domestic traitors and the hostility of a malignant foe threatened the nation with the renewal of convulsion ; when the troops and fleets of Great-Britain were prepared to act with vigor for the protection of the western realm ; when a considerable force sent to the aid of Irish rebels had been intercepted by a British squadron, and the republican captives were led about the country ; and when ‘ more than whispers of indignation were vented against a veteran soldier, who was startled at the project of inflicting exterminating vengeance on a prostrate enemy.’ Such was the situation of Ireland when it was first known that Great-Britain was ready to receive her into the communion of her liberty, wealth, industry, and happiness. ‘ In that awful and perilous situation,’ the offer was treated, by some who called themselves friends of liberty and the Irish constitution, with a degree of intemperance which resembled ‘ the fury of wild beasts alarmed at an attack upon their prey.’ The flame of discontent spread with rapidity ; and ‘ appeals of the most virulent and inflammatory tendency were made by these friends of liberty to the deluded barbarians who had been so recently
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consigned by them to indiscriminate extirpation.' When the measure was proposed, the *friends of liberty* would not suffer it to be discussed; and when it was relinquished for a time, they endeavoured to force the premature discussion of it, in the hope of precluding a fair investigation of its merits. When this first burst of noise and clamor had subsided, the sober part of the community ventured to look at the scheme, and saw nothing in it to excite alarm, but, on the contrary, concluded that it would redound to the prosperity and happiness of the country; while the 'bulk of the people, professing not to understand the subject, were perfectly indifferent to it.' In this state of the public mind, some persons of high rank did not scruple to propagate sedition during the recess of parliament, and to 'canvas popular clamor against the measure, by the most shameless impositions on the ignorance and credulity of every man who would listen to them.'—His lordship then animadverted on the assumption of a consular authority by two peers and a commoner, who issued 'a letter missive' through the realm, promoting strong petitions against the union. On this topic he expressed his sentiments with a degree of zeal and passion exceeding the demands of the occasion, and greater than the enormity of the offence. 'Let me ask the two noble lords who have thus put themselves forward, what are the exclusive pretensions of them and their right honorable colleague to guide the public opinion? Let me ask them by what authority they have issued their letter missive to every corner of the kingdom, commanding the people to subscribe an instrument fraught with foul and virulent misrepresentation? And let me ask them, is there sal-

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vation for this country under her present government and constitution, when men of their rank and situation can stoop to so shabby and wicked an artifice to excite popular outcry against the declared sense of both houses of parliament? But this is not all: if loud and confident report is to have credit, a consular exchequer has been opened for foul and undisguised bribery. I know that subscriptions are openly solicited in the streets of the metropolis, to a fund for defeating the measure of union. I will not believe that the persons to whom I have been obliged to allude can be privy to it. One of them, a noble earl, I see in his place: he is a very young man; and I call upon him as he fears to have his entry into public life marked with dishonor—I call upon him as he fears to live with the broad mark of infamy on his forehead, and to transmit it indelibly to his posterity—to stand up in his place, and acquit himself before his peers of this foul imputation. I call upon him publicly to disavow all knowledge of the existence of such a fund, or, if he cannot disavow it, to state explicitly any honest purpose to which it can be applied. If it can exist, I trust there are sufficient remains of sense and honor in the Irish nation, to cut off the corrupted source of these vile abominations.'

He now apologised for the length of his harangue, but was unwilling to conclude without a reference to the Scotch union, though his remarks on that part of the British history were not new or important. Having applauded the good sense of those Scots who 'laid the only solid and lasting foundation of peace and security for their religion, laws, liberty, and prosperity, by an entire and perfect union with England,' he added, 'It is with cordial sincerity, and a full conviction that it will give,

give, to this my native country, lasting peace and security for her religion, her laws, her liberty, and her property, an increase of strength, riches, and trade, and the final extinction of national jealousy and animosity, that I now propose to this grave assembly an entire and perfect union of the kingdom of Ireland with Great-Britain. If I live to see it completed, to my latest hour I shall feel an honorable pride in reflecting on the little share which I may have in contributing to effect it.'

The earl of CHARLEMONT denied that he had opposed the union by bribery, but allowed that he had endeavoured to procure petitions to counteract those addresses which were promoted by all the influence of government. He thought it his duty to pursue all constitutional means for the defeat of a project which appeared to him to be full of detriment and injury to Ireland, and of danger to the British empire.

The marquis of DOWNSHIRE, as might have been expected, rose to repel the chancellor's accusation, and state his objections to the union. He declared, that he belonged to no party or faction which endeavoured to obstruct or oppose his majesty's government in the necessary business of the country. He lamented that the ministers had given so much attention to rumors, and that in their judgement reports were sufficient to blast the character of any individual. He had heard of an anti-union subscription; but he did not believe the information. He was surprised that the learned lord had made use of so ridiculous an expression as the 'consular exchequer.' If such a fund existed, he could honestly assert that he had never subscribed to it, and had not even been desired to contribute to it.

Having thanked the earl of Clare for his 'admirable speech,'

speech,' he begged leave to differ from him in more than one point. He did not agree with him in assigning the cause of the late unnatural and abominable rebellion. He considered it as having been principally occasioned by the inconsistent conduct of the government. At one time he had been requested, as a friend to that government, to sign a strong declaration in support of the protestant ascendancy; but, if he could have foreseen the consequences, he would sooner have suffered an amputation of the hand that signed it than have put his name to it; not but that he was a true and zealous protestant, and a sincere friend to the established church of Ireland. A few months afterwards, he was called upon by the same government to vote for the emancipation of the catholics, to which, though he was not of an intolerant disposition, he could not accede. This contradictory policy must have had a tendency to irritate the public mind, and seemed to have led to those evils which now, in subserviency to the ministerial project, were ascribed to other causes.

He could not form so favorable an idea of the proposed union, as to think that it was expedient or necessary. If it had been proposed in a time of peace, and amidst the prevalence of good order, when the hearts and minds of men were sufficiently free from passion and prejudice to allow them to consider the subject with due impartiality, he might have heard of it with less dissatisfaction; but it was now particularly unseasonable, being brought forward at a time of distraction and turbulence; and he was apprehensive that it would inflame public discontent, and obstruct the return of tranquillity. To prove that the country had made great advances in wealth and commerce without that closeness of connexion

nexion which it was now thought to require, he mentioned the increasing produce of the customs and excise from the year 1782; and he flattered himself with the prospect of a farther augmentation, under the auspices of a separate legislature.

Still smarting under the ministerial accusation, the marquis again vindicated the propriety of his conduct. He felt inexpressible uneasiness at being branded as a factious man, after he had sacrificed his youth, his health, and his fortune, in the support of the king and the government of Ireland. Was it just or candid to impute seditious views to one who had pursued an opposite course, and who had studiously cherished the sound principles of loyalty? If he had signed his name to a 'letter missive,' was it to invite an insurrection, or recommend unconstitutional proceedings? In putting his signature to that letter, he had acted as an independent gentleman of Ireland, as a man of large possessions, acquainted with the state of the country, and deeply interested in its welfare. As it had been confidently asserted, that the unionists had a greater extent of property than their opponents, it was incumbent on those who had a better knowledge of the opinion of the public to call for a constitutional declaration of sentiment, not from the dregs of the people, but from the more respectable part of the community, that the minister and his friends might be convinced of their error. This was not the conduct of seditious or disloyal men. He had not, as many had, engaged by a written test to procure a parliamentary reform, and promote various bills for augmenting the influence of democracy. He had checked all such schemes as were devised for sinister purposes rather than for the general good,

good, and had firmly opposed the aims of factious leaders.

If an union had been proposed in 1782, it would probably have been supported by his lordship, who did not at that time admire the consitution which was supposed to have conferred on Ireland the honors and the blessings of independence; but, as advantages which he did not foresee had really accrued from that settlement, he did not wish it to be subverted on mere speculation, or in the visionary hope of greater benefits. The country having been preserved by the energy of its parliament, he could not persuade himself to a surrender or an annihilation of that body. He could not consent to that diminution of prerogative which the king would suffer from the abolition of the Irish house of peers; nor could he agree to the loss of that assembly of commons by which the interests of Ireland were better known and more zealously promoted than they could be in a distant parliament.

He then bestowed some compliments on Mr. Pitt; spoke in high terms of the character of the king; and expressed strong resentment against those who had dared to represent him to such a sovereign in the light of a factious man.

Lord GLENTWORTH declared his firm conviction that an union alone could quiet the country and secure the empire. In the present state of Ireland, he said, no medium could take place between close union and total separation. He mingled with his arguments some animadversions on the conduct of the triumvirate, and asserted the notoriety of the existence of the treasury mentioned by the chancellor.

The viscount Dillon was apprehensive that disloyalty
would

would not be checked by the union, and that it would not promote the security of the country. Lord Donoghmore reasoned chiefly on the subject of the catholic claims, which, he thought, might be more safely and effectually adjusted after a consolidation of the legislatures. The viscount Powerscourt denied the competency of the parliament to the adoption of the measure; the viscount Carleton not only defended that point, but supported the particular provisions of the plan; and the archbishop of Cashel also argued in favor of the competency. The earl of Farnham objected to the inconvenient distance of the united parliament from Ireland, and dreaded the provincial subjection of that country to Britain. The earl of Glandore was an advocate for the union, as were the chief justice Kilwarden and lord Sunderlin; while the earl of Bellamont strongly declaimed against it. The first resolution now passed the house by a majority of 49, the numbers being 75 and 26.

On the 24th of February, the lord-chancellor having moved the article which fixed a time for the commencement of the union, an opposing speech was delivered by the earl of Farnham, who affected to dread the loss of Ireland from the rashness and obstinacy of the court, and proposed that the date should be expunged. After a short debate, the amendment was rejected by a majority of 25. An amendment moved by the earl of Bellamont to the second article was also exploded; and equally fruitless was the opposition of the lords Blayney and Dunsany to the third.

To prevent that interruption of our report of the proceedings of the lords, which an immediate recurrence to the intervening debates of the commons would occasion, we will in this place give a sketch of the discussions

discussions which occurred in March in the upper house. On the 22d of that month, the fourth article was reprobated by the earl of Farnham, who observed that the proposed representation of the Irish peerage was a mere mockery, only calculated to cover the glaring impropriety and injustice of the union, and hoped that, if the majority should determine upon the measure, the proportion of Irish members would be more accurately adjusted, and a sufficient number of the representatives of the minor boroughs of Great-Britain stricken off, to make room for those of Ireland. A much more important speech was that of the chief baron of the exchequer, lord YELVERTON.

This speaker began with tracing the history of the constitution of parliament. It sprang, he said, out of the feudal system: its first members were the immediate vassals of the crown; and, for a long time, the commons or burgesses did not form a part of the assembly. No traces appeared of any positive law in the English history, ordaining the practice of representation; but, in Scotland, an act passed in 1427, excusing from attendance the barons who held smaller estates of the crown, on condition that they should send deputies from the shires. At length considerable boroughs were permitted by the crown to send representatives, who, as well as the knights of the shires, sat in the same chamber with the lords; but, the number of members being successively augmented by the liberality or policy of the court, the commons of England separated from the lords. Both, he added, sat in right of property; the lords in right of the property which they possessed, and the commons in right of that which they represented. The people, merely as such, were not represented, but only the property of the country,

country, whether consisting 'in real or personal wealth, in corporeal inheritance, or incorporeal franchise.' In exemplification of this point, he mentioned the allowance of suffrages to an elector according to the number of freeholds or franchises possessed by him in different counties or boroughs; whereas, if he voted from an inherent personal right, he could only make one choice. The loss of the right of voting, he might also observe, followed the loss of one or more freeholds. The right, therefore, arose from the property. Power, he added, had followed property in all its fluctuations from one order of the state to another; and those fluctuations produced the events out of which the constitution had grown into its present form, and from which, though immediately operating to other ends, we derived a settled æquilibrium of power. From this view of a constitution common to Great-Britain and Ireland, it might be inferred as a rule, that, in the arrangement of an union, the number of representatives to be sent from each to the imperial parliament should be regulated by the property of each, or, in other words, by the ability of each to contribute to the support and defence of the whole state. Estimating the relative ability of each nation by four *criteria*,—namely, the peace establishments of the two countries at a time when the union was not in contemplation, their expences in the present war, the annual interest required for the sums borrowed during that time, and the probable establishments after the return of peace, with the additional consideration of the comparative amount of their commerce,—his lordship thought himself warranted to assume $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, or 15 to 2, as the fair medium. This ratio, he said, would allow about $\frac{7}{4}$ of the

the commons for Ireland ; but, if the productive population of each country should also be taken into the account, it might be expedient to extend the number to 100 ; a proportion which the house of commons had pronounced to be fair and equitable. It was less easy to determine, by any rule known to the constitution, what ought to be the number of peers deputed to the parliament ; but the judgment of the authors of the Scottish union, who fixed upon the proportion of more than one peer to three commoners, might serve as a guide. Their example, indeed, had not been closely followed ; but the number of Irish noblemen who already had seats in the British house of peers would more than compensate the disproportion. In one point of view, Ireland would have the advantage over Scotland, by sending to the imperial legislature nearly a sixth part of her temporal peerage, whereas North-Britain sent only a ninth.

From the consideration of these points, the chief baron passed to the general subject of the union. The great value of the arrangement of 1782, which he assisted in forming, was, that it placed the Irish ' on a proud footing of legislative independence,' and enabled them to say upon what terms they were willing to unite ; whereas, if that adjustment had not occurred, they would perhaps before this time have ' yielded to an union of subjection, not an union of equality.' Their independence had never since been violated ; and they were not now desired to give up their legislative rights, but to perpetuate them by union : their liberties would not be annihilated, but would be rendered immortal, by being placed on the same broad base with those of Great-Britain. The Hibernian parliament would

so far be annihilated, as to be no longer a distinct legislature; and so would that of Great-Britain be extinguished; but out of the two a third would arise, neither British nor Irish, but a compound body, more competent than either to promote and secure the freedom, the prosperity, and the happiness of the whole.

If an idle fondness for independence had prevailed from the beginning, no political association, said the judge, could have been framed, and mankind must have remained in a state of nature. But prudence and policy taught two or more families to form a society, societies to form a nation, and small nations to form a great one, by sacrificing distinct independence to common security.

The condition of Ireland was miserable when it was divided into petty principalities, inflamed with the pride of independence. Disorder and dissension prevailed; and scenes of rapine and bloodshed were deplorably frequent. But such a state was not peculiar to Ireland, being general among petty dynasties.

In the opinion of some politicians, the existing federal alliance between Britain and Ireland might be made to operate as a sufficient remedy for all the disorders of the latter realm. But the history of the world proved the inadequacy of federal connexion to the purposes of real union; for the jealousy of the weaker state would always prompt it to separate itself from the stronger. An incorporative union could alone prevent the effects of this jealousy.

His lordship then combated the conclusion drawn against the union from the interposition of the sea as a physical barrier between Ireland and Britain, by alleging that the commercial utility of the sea was rather an argument for an union. He then asserted the com-

petence of the two parliaments to enact the proposed measure, saying that union was only a law common to two states, and that to doubt the competency of two legislatures to frame such a law was to doubt their competency to answer the ends of their institution. He concluded with remarks, not very appositely introduced, on the folly of courting popular applause.

The question was then put, whether twenty-eight temporal and four spiritual peers should represent Ireland in the imperial parliament; and a majority of 34 assented to that proportion. Two amendments were then proposed by the earl of Clare, and adopted; importing that on the extinction of three Irish peerages one might be created, till the number should be reduced to 100, and afterwards one for every failure; and that the qualifications of the Irish for the imperial parliament should be the same in point of property with those of the British members.

On the 24th of March, the peers agreed to an amendment, more completely identifying the churches of England and Ireland. On the subject of finance, the earl of Farnham objected to the regulations, being desirous that Ireland, from comparative inability, should not pay more than a twenty-ninth part of the general expence. The chancellor replied, that the country, by the proportion already adjusted, would save considerably, and that her means of contribution would be gradually augmented.

All the articles being sanctioned in the committee, the report was offered on the 26th, and confirmed by the house. A message to the commons was then proposed, when the earl of Bellamont renewed his opposition to a measure which the state of Ireland did not, in his opinion, require. The calamities of the kingdom,
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he thought, did not arise from internal legislation or internal politics, but from the illiberal conduct of the British cabinet; and those evils, great as they certainly were, could be removed only by a resident parliament; for an imperial legislature, however well disposed, would not possess the great advantages of information and influence which were necessary for establishing the tranquillity of the country. In the principle of contribution to the general expences of the empire, he readily concurred; but it would be more honorable for Ireland to contribute by the medium of an independent parliament, than to lose her constitution, and acquiesce in the grants which might be ordered by the combined legislature. That a different plan might be devised, he moved for a postponement of the message.

The earl of Desart thought the propositions too advantageous to Ireland to justify refusal. The viscount Powerscourt considered them in an opposite light; and the duke of Leinster apprehended that disunion would follow the accomplishment of the scheme,

For the motion of delay only 18 votes were given, while 47 opposed it. The original motion was then carried by a more considerable majority, the number of suffrages being 72 against 22. The peers then entered upon other business, leaving the re-consideration of the plan of union to the British parliament.

CHAP. XI.

Progress of the Scheme in the Irish House of Commons.

THE general principles or grounds of the union having been sufficiently discussed in both houses, it was proposed by the ministry, that the particular terms should become the topics of deliberation : but, in almost every succeeding debate, the principle of the measure was still noticed with great applause or with strong censure.

When it was moved, on the 14th of February, that a general committee should proceed to the consideration of the union, colonel VEREKER congratulated the house on what he termed the defeat of the ministry, in obtaining such a paltry majority at the last meeting, and hoped either that the project would be abandoned, or that ample time would be allowed for ascertaining the sense of the people on the subject.

A spirited debate now arose, in which * the honorable GEORGE KNOX, one of the representatives for the university of Dublin, distinguished himself as an anti-unionist. Before the application of a remedy, the existence of a disease, he said, ought to be fully proved. It ought to be demonstrated that the constitution of Ireland was unsound, before any extraordinary attempt should be made for its cure. It was not sufficient to say that it was imperfect ; for its imperfections were not so glaring as to justify the proposed innovation. Some might deny that the present scheme was

* • Not (as is said in the title of the pamphlet formed by the speech of Mr. Knox) on the 17th.

one of that description, as the Irish would still remain under the sway of a parliament; but, though it might not be an innovation upon words or names, it would be an innovation upon the spirit and substance of the constitution. If the parliament should be removed to Madras, it might be said that the Irish would retain their former constitution; but he deemed it an essential part of the system, that there should be a free, constant, and immediate communication between the legislature and the nation for which it acts.

He further observed, that, however respectable for character and fortune the hundred members for Ireland might be, they would not be the best qualified by habit or information to conduct all the complicated affairs of so 'rich, populous, and sensitive' a nation. By the present system, 'every variety of interest, property, talent, knowledge, wisdom, and energy,' which existed in the country at large, found itself represented in the national councils; but, by the new arrangement, only one species of property, and one description of men, both of the class acknowledged to be the most inert, would be represented.

He affirmed, rather paradoxically, that, though a government would become strong by the acquiescence of the governed, this acquiescence could not always be obtained by a promotion of the prosperity of the country. 'Nations,' he said, 'act not from reason, but from sentiment. Attachment to ancient laws and usages, affection for the family of the sovereign, religious veneration, and, above all, a feeling of identity with the state, are the bonds which hold societies together. Why do I expect that the British constitution will be immortal? It is because of the conviction which every man in that happy island feels, that, im-

mediately or remotely, he possesses some influence over the government of his country. To which of these sentiments are we to look for the allegiance of our people?' As to the last, he did not think that one man in Ireland, after the completion of the union, would ever dream of his being in possession of the slightest weight in the councils of the empire; and, if the Irish should be well governed, and their wealth should in consequence be augmented, the more proud, ambitious, and discontented they would become. 'Woe to that nation,' he exclaimed, 'for whose pride, ambition, and discontent, there is no natural and constitutional issue!' Perhaps, he added, the fire of jacobinism, when it should be extinguished in France, might burst forth in Ireland; and the whole civilised world might have cause to deplore the consequences of this rash scheme.

After the delivery of several speeches, some of which recommended delay, Mr. GOULD investigated the subject. He said, that the records of the world did not exhibit a scene so singular as that of a minister desiring a parliament to extinguish itself on account of its crimes or its legislative impotency. He trusted, however, that the honest sense of the house and the country would triumph over the machinations of the court. The British minister thought that the best mode of persuading the parliament to vote its own destruction would be to contend for its power; and he therefore asserted its full competency: but, said Mr. Goold, 'I maintain its incompetency.' He admitted that it possessed very extensive authority, and might even bind the people by laws without their avowed concurrence; but contended that it had no right to ordain any important change against the expressed will of the

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the community. It was the doctrine of sir Edward Coke and other constitutional lawyers, that nothing contrary to reason could have the force of law; and what could be more contrary to reason, than that a delegated and representative assembly should decide against the sense of its constituents?—With regard to the commercial part of the plan, he declared, that no advantages of that kind could compensate the loss of political liberty. Ireland was less desirous of being a nation of traders than a nation of freemen, and would find the best and most permanent sources of wealth and happiness in agricultural pursuits and political independence.

A motion of postponement being made, with a view to the production of additional documents requisite for the accurate comprehension of some of the detailed articles, 89 members voted for it, and 126 against it. Another debate, and a new division, followed; and 157, against 110, refused to delay the discussion even to the 17th; but the secretary, though thus successful in the division, waved the right of immediate deliberation, and assented to the desired adjournment.

On the appointed day, the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER spoke in defence of the union. To prove its necessity, he gave a sketch of the history of Ireland from the year 1782. The constitution which that country then obtained was, in his opinion, very inadequate to the purposes of political welfare and prosperity; and it left the connexion between the realms in such a hazardous state, that, unless some strong measures should be speedily adopted, a total separation would be a very probable event. The danger was augmented in an alarming degree by the industrious and artful propagation of democratic doctrines and jacobinical

nical principles. He expatiated on this ground of apprehension; and, in discussing a topic so fertile of censure and abuse, he indulged himself in the warmth of personality, though the cause which he supported did not require this irregular and digressive aid. He ought to have suffered it to stand upon its own merits, instead of endeavouring to promote it by acrimonious invectives against its opponents.

MR. GRATTAN, being the chief object of accusation and reproach, vindicated himself in strong language, and retorted the insinuations of unconstitutional and treasonable conduct. Mr. Corry replied with redoubled severity; and Mr. Grattan rejoined with greater warmth, prodigally using terms of pointed censure and gross contumely, if not of scurrilous abuse*.

General HUTCHINSON † then rose, and exercised his spirited eloquence in favor of the union. He ridiculed the fears or the pretences of those members who alleged that the measure would subvert the independence of Ireland, and enslave her to a foreign parliament. To the control of that legislature, he said, the Irish were already subject in all questions of external legislation. The co-equality of their parliament with that of Great-Britain was the dream of fancy, which never would be realised. Any attempt to make a practical use of their independence would expose their connexion with a protecting kingdom to the risque of dissolution, and accelerate the ruin of their country. From such a state of inferiority they would be elevated by the union into a state of equal independence with Britain, and would

* Mr. Grattan's recrimination produced a challenge from Mr. Corry; and the hostile orators risked their lives in a duel, in which the latter was wounded, but not dangerously.

† Now lord Hutchinson, justly ennobled for his exploits in Egypt.

obtain

obtain the right of interfering in the concerns of a great and noble empire, and indeed in those of the whole world.

The loss of British connexion would either throw Ireland into the arms of France, or involve her in the miseries of misgovernment or of anarchy. She ought, therefore, to preserve that connexion with the most scrupulous anxiety ; and the best mode of securing it seemed to be the acceptance of the present offer from Great-Britain. Surely it would be better to be a component part of a free and flourishing empire, than to be a weak and petty state, convulsed with faction, or the deluded victim of treacherous allies and unfeeling despotisms.

A dread of British artifice and perfidy had been intimated in some of these discussions ; but he would venture to assert, that Great-Britain could not be false to Ireland and at the same time true to herself. Her capacious wisdom had long since taught her to reject that idle and dangerous line of policy which her circumscribed folly had induced her to adopt : she was convinced that her prosperity was connected with that of the sister kingdom, and that each island was necessary to the other.

The experience of two centuries tended to destroy the hope of the stability of the present constitution of the Hibernian parliament. Its failure was manifest ; it had weakened the empire without strengthening Ireland. Formed for the infancy of a foreign and a small colony, it had sunk before the manhood of a great nation, and had become private property instead of public right. The national tranquillity could not be secured by such a parliament, amidst the disorders and
turmoils

turmoils of Europe. ‘ If within (he added) every thing is hollow, if without every thing is menacing, let me ask you where is your remedy against internal distraction? Where is your shield against foreign invasion? What is property without security? What is liberty when life is in danger, and when the house of a country gentleman must either be his garrison or his tomb?’

All the arguments which he had heard against the union, were addresses to the pride, the passions, the prejudices of an irritable nation, more accustomed to act from the impulse of quick feelings, than from the dictates of sound discretion and sober reason. He admitted the necessity of endeavouring to preserve a sense of national dignity: it was the source of all pre-eminence, of all power, strength, and greatness. He wished that Ireland had ‘ something to nourish this noble passion;’ but, for the last six centuries, she had exhibited the melancholy picture of savage acrimony and barbarous discord, of party zeal and sectarian struggle; of a fugitive government without fixed principles; a minister without responsibility; a parliament fearless of the people, from whom it did not derive its origin; a triumphant aristocracy, and a deluded nation. For eighty years of this century, the government had been the most arbitrary and oppressive of any in Europe. The treatment of the catholics, in particular, had been brutally inhuman; and, though some of the laws against that sect had been repealed, the consequences of a barbarous code were still evident. Under such a mode of administration, it was impossible to hope for love to the laws, zeal for the constitution, or attachment to the government. ‘ That pure, unsullied, unalloyed allegiance, the vital principle of states, the only

only solid foundation of legitimate rule, which will not yield to the clumsy chain of force, but is created by benefits, acknowledged by gratitude, and nourished by hope, can only be expected by a good and beneficent government from a happy and contented people. The powers of the earth will at length learn this salutary truth, that government must ever be in danger when the subject has nothing to lose.'

In a country where equal law and equal liberty were unknown, the progress of French principles, to which he chiefly attributed the late rebellion, would be more rapid than in other states. An island thus misgoverned was a prepared soil for the reception of jacobin principles; and they had flourished in it with all the growth of rank luxuriance. On this topic he declaimed with impressive energy of sentiment and unaffected elegance of diction; and he concluded a pleasing harangue by declaring, that no popular delusion, no idle clamor or misrepresentation, should ever induce him to depart from what he considered as 'a great fundamental truth, that the best government for these countries would be one executive and one legislature, a connected people and an united parliament.'

After other members had taken part in the debate, Mr. FOSTER again appeared as a decided anti-unionist. He affirmed that the boasted terms, instead of offering great benefits, were replete with injury; that every point to which they tended might be as well secured by a separate parliament; that all contained the seeds of constant jealousy, and avowed distinct interests, the continuance of which they ensured; and that they must therefore promote separation. It was now pretended, that the union was necessary to save Ireland from bankruptcy; but, in the last year, it was alleged that the

growing

growing wealth of the country rendered it difficult and hazardous to govern it by the existing constitution. The mere mention of these inconsistent allegations, he said, exposed the assertors to ridicule. The idea that the new plan would diminish the public expences of Ireland, was fallacious; for he had no doubt that it would increase her expenditure. Taking notice of the secretary's statements of comparative expence, he said, that, as he could find no paper which justified his lordship's account of that of Ireland, he would follow the report of the committee of accounts for 1798, a year in which the charges were unusually great. The expences of that year were 4,709,254 pounds, or, in British currency, 4,347,000 pounds, which, added to the minister's statement of the civil, military, and extraordinary charges of Great-Britain in the last year, would form 37,047,000 pounds. Two seventeenths of this aggregate, the proposed contribution of Ireland in the event of an union, would be 4,358,470 pounds, exceeding by 11,470 pounds the sum which that country actually paid. As, by his lordship's calculation, the war proportion of Ireland would be 4,492,000 pounds, she would pay 145,000 pounds more than she recently paid, instead of the boasted saving of about a million.

By another comparison, the speaker endeavoured to demonstrate, that his country would have enormously increased her debt, if the union, on the present plan, had taken place at the beginning of the war. Great-Britain, within six years ending in January 1799, had augmented her debt by 186 millions; but to that of Ireland, within six years terminating in the March of that year, only about fourteen millions had been added. Of this joint debt her share would have been about 23,530,000 pounds, or, in Irish money, nearly 25 millions

millions and a half; but, in her separate capacity, she had increased her debt by no more than 15,092,000 pounds in her own currency. The excess above this sum (10,408,000 pounds) would, if averaged on the six years, have made an increased charge in each of 1,734,666 pounds. 'This (he said) is one of the ways in which the noble lord would give us a million a year!' Other instances of ministerial generosity would have appeared in the subjection of Ireland to a share (amounting annually to 955,881 pounds Irish) in the burthen of permanent taxes imposed during those six years, and to the payment of 1,465,685 pounds annually in new temporary taxes. The deduction of 700,000 pounds from the three last-mentioned sums, in consideration of the superiority of the revenue of 1799 to that of 1793, would leave an annual increase of 3,456,239 pounds—certainly a very extraordinary mode of relief!

He estimated the peace establishment at a lower amount than that which was stated by the minister, and the revenue at a higher rate; and contended for the ability of Ireland to defray her own expences without the aid which the incorporation with Britain was said to promise. 'Where then,' he asked, 'is the national bankruptcy with which the noble lord so kindly threatens us? One inference naturally occurs from his statement, that the whole train of the kingdom's expences will remain—the lord-lieutenant, the state, the civil list, the offices—in short, every thing but your parliament; and I cannot too often or too strongly press upon you this truth, that the real question of the union is, parliament or no parliament!'

Comparing the commercial offers with the propositions to which the house had agreed in the year 1785, he observed, that 'they reduced the duties on the importation

tation of the articles of gross produce or manufacture from one kingdom into the other, where they were higher in one, to the amount payable in the other. . As our duties were almost universally lower, every protection given by duty to our manufactures would have remained, and the result would have been, that our duties would have been the standard. In short, as the higher British duties were inoperative, the object was to leave the intercourse in general in a sort of *statu quo*, so far as duties affected it. But what do these terms declare? that every duty existing in Ireland on British manufacture is either to be reduced to 10 *per cent.* or totally to cease.'

Among the articles which would be affected by this reduction, he mentioned apparel, haberdashery, hardware, pottery, saddlery, glass, wrought copper, manufactured silk, cotton, and many other commodities: he even extended the number beyond seventy. The cotton branch, he thought, would feel irreparable injury, notwithstanding a recent declaration from the secretary, that the protection would only be withdrawn from it by degrees; for, whether its death should be sudden or lingering, every man would draw his capital out of it as speedily as he could, and no capital would come from England to a manufacture which required a high protecting duty against English import.

The former propositions had provided for an effectual preference in each kingdom against similar articles from foreign states, thus strengthening the security for Irish against foreign linen in the British market; but these, said he, 'are wholly silent on that head.' Those left to both parliaments the power of imposing duties 'on the importation of foreign articles, or foreign materials of manufacture for home use: these
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take away that power from Ireland by taking away its parliament.' But the imperial legislature, we may suppose, will exercise that power as much for the benefit of Ireland as of Great Britain.

He was sorry to observe, that hops, salt, and coal, were always to be burthened with the present duties on importation into Ireland. He could not conceive what were the motives for the unalterable continuance of these imposts.

To the alleged benefits in the article of sail-cloth, the Irish had a claim of right without an union: full relief had been promised; and the chief obstacle to the success of the manufacture was removed three years ago by a discontinuance of the bounties which Britain allowed on the exportation of her sail-cloth to Ireland.

Though the free importation of wool was extolled as a great sacrifice from Britain, he could not 'see its particular beneficial effects.' The heavy freight of that commodity, and other circumstances, would render the benefit very inconsiderable.

The effects of the commercial regulations on the Irish revenue, he added, would not be so advantageous as the minister pretended. 'We give up a good and certain revenue of 76,000 pounds a year, which we raise on export to Britain, and she gives us up a similar revenue of 26,000 pounds only. For the remainder we are sent to India to look.' This was an allusion to the promised (perhaps visionary) share of 500,000 pounds *per annum*, payable by the East-India company.

Upon the whole view of finance, revenue, and commerce, whether the articles were good or bad, he defied any man to say that there was one article to which an Irish parliament was incompetent, or one to which an united parliament was not less adequate, inasmuch as

the regulation of duties and of trade between the kingdoms required a quick and ready knowledge of the local circumstances of Ireland, which could be effectually obtained by a resident legislature alone.

In his examination of the constitutional effects of the scheme, he was not more disposed to approve or admire it. 'As to the upper house (he said), it creates a sort of mongrel peer, half lord, half commoner, neither the one nor the other complete, and yet enough of each to remind you of the motley mixture. Every body knows, or should know, that, by the original and uninterrupted constitution of parliament, a lord cannot interfere in the election of a commoner; yet here he is not only to interfere, but may be a candidate, and may sit and act as a commoner. The twenty-eight chosen lords are to sit for life, though they are only representatives; thus counter-acting one great principle—that representatives shall only act for a time limited—acknowledged by the septennial and octennial bills, and by the articles of the Scotch union in respect to the lords. With this seat for life to the chosen lords, what is to become of the remaining peers, perhaps nearer 200 than 100 in number? They now are legislators: pass these articles, they instantly cease to be so; they will be the only subjects in Ireland incapable of acting as legislators; a degradation ruinous to the nobility. Every heir to a title, mediately or immediately, now seeks in his studies and his education to qualify himself for the high duties of a legislator, of an hereditary counsellor to the crown. But this fatal measure of election for life will leave so little hope and so little chance, that all inducement to improvement, to education, to study the interests of his country, will be done away. You depress the spirit and enervate the exertions

exertions of all the rising nobility of the land. Further, by a strange sort of absurdity, the measure, in suffering him as a commoner to take a British seat, and refusing to allow him an Irish one, admits this monstrous position, that, in the country where his property, his connexions and residence are, he shall not be chosen a legislator; but, in the one where he is wholly a stranger, he may; and you add this certain consequence, that you will induce a residence of the Irish nobility in Britain, where they may be elected commoners; and must of course solicit interest; thereby increasing the number of your absentees, and gradually weaning the men of largest fortune from an acquaintance or a connexion with their native country.

As to the commons, this fatal union will not be less unconstitutional. It reduces their number from 300 to 100, though the constitution has pronounced the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of 300 to be necessary for legislature, and for the preservation of the balance of power established among the three branches; and it not only commits a violation on the number but on the qualifications. One great principle is, that in the house of commons every species of property is represented, and the wisdom of the whole increased by a mixture of country gentlemen, merchants, lawyers, and men of all professions. But this measure shuts the door against commercial men and against the professors of the law, who cannot desert their business to attend parliament in another country.

In the case of controverted elections, he said, the impracticability of an effectual determination of the dispute by Irish members deputed from Britain (for want of the power of enforcing the attendance of witnesses,

and punishing for prevarication or breach of privilege), and the great expence of a decision at Westminster, would ultimately leave the nomination of members to the sheriffs.

He also noticed that destruction of chartered rights which would attend the union—‘rights vested in some bodies for 600 years, and always exercised for the benefit of the state, and which had sometimes proved the great safeguard and security of the constitution.’—One consequence, he added, was too striking to be passed over. ‘What would you think of the man who should be hardy enough to rise in this house and propose to make *all taxes perpetual*? Yet this must be a necessary step towards the measure.’

The other branch of the legislature, he said, would likewise suffer from the scheme; for it would limit the prerogative of the king in the creation of peers, and deprive him of the benefit of all his hereditary counselors, except the few who would be chosen.

‘Thus does it, like every other ill-considered wanton project, teem with evils. It injures revenue and trade, and in every regulation violates all the known principles of the constitution in the lords, the commons, and the king. It is called an union, but it is only an union of the two parliaments: there can be no union of the nations while distinct interests exist; and almost every line of the plan declares the distinctness of interest in revenue, in purse, in commerce, in constitution.’

After several repetitions of remark, he spoke of the tendency of the measure to an augmentation of the influence of the crown; censured the ‘unconstitutional use to which the place bill had been perverted’ by the minister and his friends, the ‘appeal nominal to which they had resorted against the decision of parliament,’ and

and the 'monstrous proposal of applying the public money to the purchase of public rights from private individuals;' and finally moved for a dereliction of the project.

LORD CASTLEREAGH blamed the want of foresight in the speaker, who, without reflecting on the distractions and evils of Ireland, opposed the idea of settlement, and would leave the country open to a renewal of disorder and mischief, to a fresh gradation from jealousy to discontent, from discontent to faction, from faction to conspiracy, from conspiracy to rebellion. On the statements of Mr. Foster he made various comments, which, after our frequency of detail, we need not minutely particularise. That gentleman, said his lordship, had made an estimate of war expenditure alone, formed on the average of six years, to answer an estimate founded on the average of seven years both of peace and war; had omitted to state, that, during the first three years of the war, our expenditure for its prosecution was trifling, and that the want of a greater establishment had nearly produced our entire destruction; and had closed his statements with the year ending at Lady-day 1799, excluding the following year, which was that of the greatest expence. He had lowered the establishments beneath reality, and elevated the revenues beyond their probable produce; and, in other respects, had argued fallaciously, and had drawn erroneous conclusions.

Into the commercial part of the secretary's harangue we shall not enter, as our report of the speech of Mr. Beresford will contain a more satisfactory answer to the principal objections of Mr. Foster.

Mr. WILLIAM JOHNSON indignantly reprobated the insinuations of corrupt influence, thrown out against

those who favored the union. It was said that they had been *bought*; but what, he asked, had bought them? the state of the country and the fate of Europe. What had bought others, had also bought him. The question had been forced upon him by the prevailing calamities; and he had examined it from no other motive or impulse than an anxious desire of meeting the peculiar evils of the country. He viewed it under three aspects—constitution, internal quiet, and commerce. So unsuccessful was the attempt to give independence to Ireland in 1782, that it left the country in a state of real subjection to Britain; and, indeed, he thought it impossible to secure the connexion between the countries in unison with the full freedom of a separate legislature. If Ireland should practically be as independent of Britain as the theory of that settlement required, ‘the connexion would not last a single day.’ The projectors of that scheme, by endeavouring to steer a middle course between union and separation, missed the good at which they aimed, and risked the approach of that evil which they wished to avoid: in striving to secure connexion, they sowed the seeds of separation. The absurdities of this constitution would be removed by the new plan. The subjection of the Irish government to the executive power of another country, and to that foreign legislature to which alone the rulers of the country were responsible, would give way to the legislative unity of the empire, and to a complete participation of British independence. In producing internal tranquillity, an union, he added, would be highly efficacious, by extinguishing political jealousy, and allaying religious animosity; and, in point of trade and wealth, the benefits would be of such a nature as to justify the strongest efforts of all the supporters of the measure.

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After several speeches of less moment, Mr. WILLIAM SMITH replied to some strictures on the proposed regulations of the peerage, by observing that the alterations would not diminish the real dignity of the peers, or injure the essence of their privileges, and would materially conduce to the benefit of the country. Though only a part would be admitted to a seat in the imperial house of lords, a great number, he said, would have an opportunity of constituting a portion of the assembly of the commons, and would thus maintain and strengthen the interests of Ireland in the united legislature. He then declared his opinion, that none of the adverse arguments which had been urged on this or any former day ought to have any influence on the question, except that of increasing the conviction which the unionists had before entertained of the necessity and policy of the measure. The assertion of its tendency to a subversion of the constitution, was, he said, false and absurd, as was also the position that it would annihilate national independence. How could any man of sense and information conceive that an incorporation of the two parliaments would affect the dignity of Ireland otherwise than by placing it on a great and honorable foundation, or subvert the constitution of that country otherwise than by giving it purity, strength, and stability?—He adduced other arguments and illustrations which were more destitute of novelty than of force.

Mr. G. PONSONBY, unconvinced by the arguments of the unionists, still maintained the inexpediency of the great change which they recommended, and declared that he would continue to oppose it with vigor.

The ensuing division gratified the court with a ma-

majority of 46. Both parties now concluded that the scheme would be finally successful.

When lord Castlereagh, on the 21st of February, moved for the assent of the committee to the first article of the plan, Mr. O'HARA deprecated this obstinate persistence in a measure which would check the progress of prosperity in Ireland, and reduce the kingdom to a depressed and degraded province. His lordship's avowal, that the question resolved itself into this—whether Ireland was to be a magazine of strength and resources to Great-Britain, or of wealth for the grasp of France—sufficiently proved, said this anti-unionist, that the object was the sacrifice of one country to the necessities of the other; an illiberal principle which the Irish ought to resist with indignant warmth.

Mr. O'DONEL apprehended, that, in every question between the countries after an union, the interests of Ireland would be sacrificed, as her members would have no power to enforce the terms. On this and other grounds, he inveighed against the measure with asperity.

Mr. Tighe, with expressions of censure, moved for an adjournment. Lord Corry declared that he would not interfere with the detail of the scheme, but would oppose the principle with inflexible perseverance; and a similar declaration was made by Mr. W. B. Ponsonby; but Mr. J. C. Beresford was of opinion, that the terms as well as the principle called for vigilant observation and attentive discussion.

Mr. SAURIN called the attention of the committee to the means by which the minister had procured his parliamentary majority,—namely, the undue exercise
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of the patronage of the crown, promises of office and emolument, the abuse of the place bill, the project of pecuniary compensation for what was not the fair or legal subject of pecuniary estimation, and the encouragement of indigent adventurers from the bar and the British army. If the nation should view the majority in such a light, on what foundation, he asked, would the union stand? If a new constitution should be imposed on the community by votes thus obtained, would an acquiescence in it be a point of obligation? He shuddered at the consequence of such conduct.

On no one ground did the union appear to him to be necessary. The danger of the country, the improvement of the connexion, did not call for it; nor was it requisite for the advancement of the arts, or the increase of national prosperity and happiness. The Irish parliament, with the aid of that British connexion which the existing constitution allowed and confirmed, had detected a conspiracy and suppressed a rebellion excited by those who aimed at a political separation of the countries. Such a violent assault upon the constitution was not again to be apprehended; but, if it should be repeated, he would rather rely on the same strength and spirit by which it was repelled, than trust to a new and untried security. The subsisting union arose from the act of annexion, was strengthened by the act which required the sanction of the great seal of England to every Irish law, and farther secured by the prevalence of long habit and by mutual interest and affection. It was a connexion of safety and independence, which he would not consent to exchange for an union of insecurity and dependence.

It was said, that the two parliaments might seriously differ;

differ ; but this ill-founded apprehension was a weak ground for the renunciation of a distinct legislature.—An appeal was made to the pride of the Irish, by saying, that the change would give them a great concern in the general transactions of the empire ; but it was not desirable, for the sake of something which was not of moment, that they should resign every thing which was of moment to their country, or that, ‘ in order to come in by a mock representation for their share of control’ over the exercise of the prerogative in the affairs of the whole empire, they should ‘ surrender the benefits and the blessings of their own parliament.’—The friends of the established church were invited to concur zealously in the scheme, by the prospect of a complete identification and permanent security of the churches of England and Ireland ; but was not the Irish church at present as strongly supported as it would be after an union—that is, by the whole force of the empire, intrusted to the sovereign for the safety of all its establishments ?—It was contended, that the project would tranquillise Ireland : but the mere bill which the two parliaments might enact would not have that effect ; and the regulations which to an imperial legislature might seem proper or salutary for the repression of animosities, the promotion of order, or the improvement of the accommodations of society, might be ordained with equal ease and efficacy by that of Ireland.

The terms he considered as refutations of the pretended excellence, and libels on the principle of the measure. ‘ Identity was promised as the grand object ; yet every thing spoke distinctness. There was another feature which struck him in the ministerial arrangements. The general parliament, it was supposed, would

would be a paragon of purity and worth ; yet the minister acknowledged that it ought not to be trusted : and he therefore shackled and restrained its omnipotence.

In short, said Mr. Saurin, ‘ I conceive the present measure to be fatal to the interests of Ireland. If it should still be pressed, on such a majority as now supports it, and against such an opposition as resists it, the minister and his adherents must be responsible for the consequences : we at least, in the hour of calamity, shall have the consolation to reflect, that we have had no share in the downfall and degradation of our country.’

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL asserted the necessity of an union as strongly as Mr. Saurin had denied it. Nothing but a measure of that kind, he was convinced, would restore the tranquillity of the country, allay civil and religious dissensions, or frustrate the views of France and the aims of the jacobins. The real dependence of the Irish parliament, and the defects of the present constitution, were so glaring, and the danger of separation so alarming, that a remedy ought to be immediately applied.—The learned gentleman repeatedly animadverted on the absurdity of those anti-unionists who admitted the existence of very serious grievances, yet offered no remedial propositions ; but the reason was, that they considered a distinct parliament as adequate to the gradual removal of abuses. He proceeded to enlarge on many points of dispute, but in a less forcible manner than some of his associates.

After a speech from Mr. Monck Mason in favor of the union, and another from Mr. Ormsby, Mr. Serjeant STANLEY promoted the same object in a copious harangue. He panegyrised the British minister for boldly striking at the root from which the disorders and calamities

mities of Ireland had sprung, and bringing forward that great measure of imperial policy which the best friends of this country had long anxiously desired rather than confidently expected. He was convinced that those evils arose from the ill-constructed connexion between the kingdoms, from the imperfections incident to a distinct parliament in a country which formed a part, and the less powerful part, of an extensive empire. Ireland, in her present state, had all the disadvantages without the advantages of British connexion, the shadow without the substance of the English constitution. She had no imperial rights, and could not acquire territory or plant a colony. She was under the necessity of registering the edicts of the British parliament in all imperial concerns of war and peace, or incurring the hazard of weakening the energies of the empire. Her subordination could only be removed by total separation, or an incorporating and equalising union; and such a consolidation was not only desirable on general principles, but was demanded by the local circumstances of Ireland, and the religious dissensions of its inhabitants. The objections to it were such as had been refuted by argument, and disproved by experience, in the case of Scotland; and it loudly called for vigorous support and universal acquiescence.

The question was then put on the motion of adjournment, which being rejected, the first day of the following January was fixed for the commencement of the union of the kingdoms; and the article which related to the settlement of the crown was also voted by the committee.

On the 24th of February, Mr. Shaw having warmly opposed the prosecution of the scheme, a division took place; but, the house being thin, only a majority of eight

eight voted for the ministry. Lord Castlereagh then justified his former financial statements; but the Speaker remained unconvinced. The chancellor of the exchequer ably defended the rate of 1 to 7½, as very favorable to Ireland, and maintained that, in the five next years, taken in the proportion of two of war to three of peace, she would save nearly ten millions. Sir John Parnell and Mr. G. Ponsonby condemned, without fully invalidating, Mr. Corry's conclusions. Mr. Egan, with fluency and vehemence, reprobated the general measure; and colonel Maxwell moved, that the committee should no longer sit. Against this motion a plurality of 42 votes appeared: an amendment, providing for the payment of the interest of the debt of either country in London or in Dublin, at the option of the stockholder, was rejected without a division; and the article respecting finance was adopted.

In compliance with some of the petitions which had been presented, several gentlemen of the law appeared at the bar to oppose various parts of the commercial scheme, and witnesses were brought forward whose evidence tended to show the impolicy of a reduction of the protecting duties. While the business of examination was depending, a motion from Mr. G. Ponsonby occasioned a debate on the 4th of March. That gentleman, alleging that the sovereign would not have persisted in recommending the present measure, unless he had firmly believed that the sentiments of the public on the subject had undergone a great change, urged the house to remove so injurious a delusion by an intimation of the truth. A knowledge of the number of anti-union petitions would, he said, correct this error; and he therefore proposed an address, stating, that, in conformity with the constitutional rights of the people,

petitions

petitions against a legislative union had been presented to the parliament from twenty-six counties, and from various cities and towns.

Lord CASTLEREAGH affirmed, that the public opinion had really undergone a change friendly to the measure, and that seventy-four declarations, nineteen of which were those of counties, had been presented in its favor. Even if this were not the case, he would oppose a motion which derogated from the deliberative power of parliament, and tended to encourage a popular interference pregnant in these critical times with danger and alarm.

Mr. SAURIN asserted the constitutionality of an appeal to the people, and enforced the proposal of his friend. Other barristers also recommended it; and the lords Corry and Cole added to the motion the weight of their influence. On the opposite side spoke lord Charles Fitzgerald, Mr. Fox, Mr. Ormsby, and several other members; and the court prevailed by a majority of 48.

On the 10th of March, the subject of parliamentary representation was discussed. The proposition allowed to Ireland was defended by the attorney-general, as favorable to the country and to popular principles; and, after a division which exhibited a majority of 19 for the court, the article was adopted.

A conversation then arose on the topic of compensation for the loss of the patronage of boroughs. Lord Castlereagh persisted in the intention of proposing a recompence, though messieurs Plunket and Goold inveighed with great warmth against the idea of rewarding the profligate invaders of the rights of the people, and expressed their astonishment at the shameless inconsistency and absurdity of those who could assert
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the omnipotence of parliament, when the members had once been chosen by the people; yet avow that the majority were not the fair representatives of the nation, but merely the creatures of borough-proprietors.

To disprove the assertion that Cork favored the union, sir John Freke presented a petition against it from eighteen hundred of the inhabitants of that city; but general Hutchinson affirmed that this was not the sense of the majority of the traders or freemen of Cork. Colonel Longfield and Mr. May concurred in this declaration. Sir John Parnell again recommended a dissolution of the parliament, that the opinions of the people might be more certainly known; but Mr. Corry reprobated that appeal as unnecessary and imprudent.

The discussion was renewed on the 13th of March, when sir John Parnell moved in form, that the king should be requested to convoke a new parliament before any final arrangement of union should be adopted. Mr. A. Moore seconded this proposal as 'wise and honest;' and sir Laurence Parsons, though he was sensible of the great influence of the crown in the choice of members, declared his willingness to put the fate of the question on the election of a new parliament. Mr. Alexander opposed the motion; but major Osborne was zealous in its support, as was also Mr. Saurin, who urged the expediency of attending to the sense of the nation, and maintained, that, if laws should be enacted in opposition to the public will, constitutionally expressed, they would not be obligatory, and the right of resistance would revert to the people. The solicitor-general could not hear such a doctrine without horror: and he accused the *father of the bar* of unfurling the bloody flag of rebellion: but Mr. Egan hinted, that the ministry had unfurled the flag of prostitution and corrup-

corruption. Mr. Saurin's opinions were controverted by Dr. Duigenan as unconstitutional and mischievous, as tending to a dissolution of all regular government, and to the production of the most horrible anarchy. Mr. Serjeant Stanley also endeavoured, by quotation and argument, to overthrow what he termed jacobinical tenets. Lord Castlereagh, when he had combated the baronet's motion by alleging that the parliament enjoyed the confidence both of his majesty and of the people, and that a dissolution was therefore unnecessary, warmly repelled a doctrine which he considered as fraught with rebellion. Mr. May and sir John Blaquiere declaimed with spirit against the proposal of appealing to the public, and urged the house to stigmatise with decisive effect the alarming invitation to popular resistance. Mr. Grattan, on the other hand, vindicated the sentiments of the barrister, and recommended the appeal, not as a reference to the mere multitude, but to the constituent body. On a division, there appeared 150 votes against the motion, and only 104 for it.

On the following day, the prime serjeant stated the expediency of an identification of the churches as well as of the parliaments of the two countries; and observed, that, whatever indulgence might be extended to the catholics, there would then be no danger of the subversion of the protestant church of Ireland. This article was quickly voted; and that which respected the existing laws and courts of both countries passed with few remarks.

The sixth article, which had been postponed on account of the complexity of the subject, was brought forward on the 19th of March by the right honorable Mr. BERESFORD. Referring to the propositions of

1785,

1785, that gentleman undertook the task of proving, that they were *less* beneficial, and that the bill which contained them in an altered form was *much less* advantageous, than the present scheme. The difference between the systems, he said, was this. In that of 1785, prohibitions were allowed to remain upon certain articles; whereas, in that of the year 1800, 'all prohibitions, prohibitory duties, and bounties upon all articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of either country, are to be taken away, and they are to be reciprocally imported and exported by either country without any bounty or duty, except in the case of those imported into Ireland, and enumerated in a schedule, upon which certain duties are imposed, as a protection to the manufactures of this country.' He then entered into a detail which would only interest a very small number of our readers, and in which therefore we shall not attempt to follow him closely, though various parts of his speech, and, above all, the general result of his investigation, demand our notice.

In mentioning the resolutions of 1785, he passed lightly over some, and chiefly dwelt on the third, sixth, and seventh. The third, he said, related to imports only; and it left former prohibitions in force against the exportation of raw materials—prohibitions which operated entirely against Ireland. The sixth was calculated to prevent any *new* prohibition, or *new* or *additional* duties from being imposed on the *importation* of articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of either country, into the other; but it left the Irish exactly in the same state in which they were before, with regard to all the prohibitions which at that time existed on the exportation of raw materials from Britain. The seventh resolution made the same provision respecting

exportation, which the sixth did on the subject of *importation*; but, as it left all former prohibitions, of which there were many in Britain against Ireland, and none in Ireland against Britain, it gave his countrymen no advantage. The latter part of it, indeed, allowed them to order reciprocal prohibitions, and to impose reciprocal prohibitory duties, where such existed in Britain: but 'that was mere mockery; for we had not the raw materials to send out, and therefore we could not gain any thing by prohibiting the exportation of them.' Such resolutions did not fully correspond with the first, which professed to regulate the trade of both countries on equitable principles, for mutual benefit.

Proceeding to the present system, he noticed the advantages promised by the first resolution of the sixth article, by which the bounties and encouragements on linen and sail-cloth, the trade of all the British colonies (on the terms granted to the English), and the benefit of all British treaties, would be secured to the Irish. He spoke of the two next resolutions as going to the very root of the evil, by 'laying open the trade, ports, and markets of each country to the other, fully and completely, not only in manufactures but in raw materials.' The free use of British wool, coal, hops, and many other valuable articles, and the unrestrained admission of all Irish manufactures into the ports of Britain, would, he said, prove his first point. He then stated some calculations relative to the bill, to prove that the general protecting duty given by it to all un-rated goods, would have been above half *per cent*, less than that which the new system would ordain.

As it was affirmed by Mr. Foster, that the new commercial regulations would operate injuriously on
more

more than seventy articles, and would entirely ruin the cotton business, he endeavoured to allay such apprehensions by intimating, that in only two of those branches (calico and muslin) the manufacturers had reason to complain; and by contending, that, if sixty-nine of those manufactures existed before 1783 under a protection of nine guineas, and were carried on from that year to 1797 with a protection of ten guineas, they would not be injured by the scheme now under contemplation. It being asserted, that the new plan would not secure a preference for linen or any article in the British market against foreign produce, though the former propositions made provision for that purpose, he answered, that such an arrangement was proper between distinct kingdoms, but that, when the two realms should be consolidated into one, it would be wholly unnecessary; for the markets of London and Bristol would be as much the markets of Ireland as those of Dublin and Cork; and it would be ridiculous to stipulate that Ireland should have the preference in her own market. As it was objected, that hops, salt, and coal, were, by one of the new resolutions, to continue for ever subject to the present duties on importation into Ireland, he replied, that this was never intended, and would be remedied by the manner in which he should move the resolution, so as to leave it open to the future parliament to reduce the duty at any time. He then combated an assertion relative to the unprotected state of the brewery; and, as it had also been affirmed, that no provision was made for the retention of the low duties on the import of raw materials, he thought it necessary to state, that the boasted propositions left every prohibition existing upon British raw

materials (all others being out of the question), but that the new system would remove all.

In reply to the allegations of witnesses who had spoken very unfavorably of the supposed effects of the scheme on particular manufactures, he took a review of the sugar trade, of the works in iron, and the silk and cotton branches. He endeavoured to prove, that the two first would be safe under the protection proposed to be allowed; and that the chief advantage in the third would accrue to the Irish. To the fourth branch, he said, all reasonable protection would be afforded, by a continuance of the duties in their present state for a certain number of years, and by a subsequent gradual diminution of them to 10 *per cent.*, at which rate they might stand for the remainder of twenty years. Thus the manufacture might have an opportunity of establishing itself; and, if it should not be able to exist with such protection, it ought not to have any existence. 'In a system of union,' he added, 'prohibition or prohibitory duties are inadmissible between the parties. In us it would be impolitic and unwise. Four-fifths of our exports go to Britain, and three-fourths of our imports come thence: a war of duties and bounties would therefore be ruinous to us. We export annually to Britain linen to the amount of 2,600,000 pounds, and provisions valued at 2,900,000 pounds. These all go into Britain free from duty there; and shall we not be content with a protecting duty of 10 *per cent.*, together with the expences of importation, being, I suppose, 5 *per cent.* more? Shall we not, I say, be contented with 15 *per cent.* protection; and shall we talk of prohibiting duties, and that in favor of a manufacture which, it is said, cannot be supported

supported without forcing the consumers to pay 50 *per cent.* upon their consumption, and which taxes the nation in the yearly sum of 400,000 pounds?

Mr. Beresford then moved the first resolution; and this, with the other parts of the commercial article, received the assent of the committee.

When it was proposed that the house should be resumed for the reception of the report, Mr. O'HARA stated some objections to the assigned rate of contribution for Ireland, which he deemed too high; and Mr. GRATTAN again expatiated on the impolicy and injustice of the union, not only in a constitutional but also in financial and commercial points of view. His remarks were more general than particular, and his arguments inconclusive.

Mr. FOSTER entered into a variety of calculations, in the hope of proving what he had before been unable to demonstrate. He endeavoured to show, that, within four years, Ireland would cease to have the benefits (even if it should be admitted that any were conceded by the article) of the ratio of 1 to $7\frac{1}{2}$, and labor under a community of burthen with Great-Britain; that the propositions of 1785 were calculated for the promotion of Irish manufactures and commerce, but that the new plan would be highly injurious to those departments; in short, that Ireland would have reason to rue the day on which her parliament should give sanction to the measure.

Lord CASTLEREAGH replied in a long speech, which would have been more worthy of general approbation if it had been less seasoned with personalities. As it had no novelty, we shall not give any abstract of it; and, for the same reason, we shall only say of the rest of the debate, that Mr. G. Ponsonby and Mr. Saurin

opposed the report of the resolutions; that Mr. Corry and the prime serjeant ably defended the general scheme and the particular articles; and that two divisions followed, one of which produced a majority of 42, and the other 47, in favor of the ministerial proceedings.

The report being presented to the house on the 21st, sir Laurence Parsons then expressed his hope, that, when the scheme should appear in the form of a bill, those gentlemen who had so nobly stood forward in defence of their country would again assail it with the most determined energy. Sir John Freke represented the terms as so disadvantageous, that they had not made a convert of a single member who had censured the principle of the measure. Sir John Macartney spoke chiefly on the subject of tithes; contending, that, if they should be exacted on the same scale in both countries, the Irish would be obliged to pay annually 1,250,000 pounds, instead of a sum less than 200,000 pounds: but it was said in answer, that this topic was unconnected with the question, and that the business might safely be left to the imperial parliament.—Mr. Bushe, with great vivacity, animadverted both on the principle and the detail; and Mr. Egan exercised his pleasantry in similar reflexions. After a renewal of attack and defence, the resolutions received the sanction of the house.

A message was now sent to the house of lords, importing that the commons had agreed to the articles of union; and, on the 27th, the peers intimated to the other house, that they had adopted them with some alterations and additions. These amendments were readily approved by the commons; and lord Castle-reagh immediately proposed an address to his majesty,
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in which both houses concurred. In this address, they declared that they 'cordially embraced the principle of incorporating Great-Britain and Ireland into one kingdom, by a complete and entire union of their legislatures;' that they considered the resolutions of the British parliament as 'wisely calculated to form the basis of such a settlement;' that by those propositions they had been guided in their proceedings; and that the resolutions now offered were those articles which, if approved by the lords and commons of Great-Britain, they were ready to 'confirm and ratify, in order that the same might be established for ever by the mutual consent of both parliaments.'

CHAP. XII.

Discussion of the Articles of Union in the Parliament of Great-Britain.

AS the plan recommended to the Irish parliament had been originally framed by the British ministry, and received no other alterations in its progress than such as were dictated by the court, the articles were in fact the propositions of the cabinet, though they were now brought forward as 'terms proposed by the lords and commons of Ireland.' They had, indeed, received the sanction of those two assemblies, but were only *proposed* by them at *second hand*.

The Irish address was communicated by the king, on the 2d of April, to the British peers and commons, that 'such further steps might be taken as might best tend to the speedy and complete execution of a work so happily begun.' Unwilling, however, to incur the imputation of precipitancy, the leaders of the unionists deferred the examination of the articles to the 21st. Earl Fitzwilliam then recommended to the peers a longer delay, that the commons might previously re-investigate the subject; but, finding that lord Grenville only intended to move at that time for the adoption of the three first resolutions, he was satisfied with the postponement of the rest.

Lord HOLLAND affirmed, that, since the question was last discussed, nothing had occurred which could induce him to approve the measure. Some of the arguments used by its advocates appeared to him to be
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drawn from the principles of messieurs Robespierre and Barrère, who had contended for an empire one and indivisible, in preference to the union of its parts by foederalism. He would not enter into the speculative merits of the question, but would confine himself to the probable consequences of its application to Great-Britain and Ireland. An incorporation, he thought, would inflict direct evils on the latter country, and would also be injurious to the freedom of the former, without offering the least compensation to the empire at large. It was obviously incompetent to the production of those very important advantages which the advisers of it promised to the public. It would not operate as a remedy for the discontent of the various descriptions of the Hibernian community. It would not ensure a redress of grievances, but would increase that influence which was already the object of general complaint. It was evidently offensive to the great body of the Irish; and, if it should be carried into effect against the sense of the people, it would endanger the connexion between the countries, and might produce irreparable mischief. It might be termed a trait of jacobinism to hold up the sense of the people in opposition to that of the parliament; but such a censure would come with a very ill grace from the supporters of a minister who had derived his power from an appeal to the people against the determination of the house of commons.—After other strictures, he declared that he would oppose the motion for a committee.

Lord GRENVILLE thought it unnecessary to debate the principle of an union, as no question, in the whole course of his parliamentary experience, had been more amply or ably discussed than this subject had been: but he was disposed to animadvert on some of the arguments

arguments or rather the observations of the noble lord, whose prejudices against the measure were still unre-moved. To suppose that it would be forced upon the people, or that corruption on the one hand, and intimidation on the other, were the means employed for its promotion, was, said the secretary, grossly calumnious. That the sense of the nation was decidedly against it, was not true; for, though it was displeasing to the enemies of British connexion, almost the whole landed interest favored the proposal, and a considerable majority of the loyal and sound portion of the community earnestly wished it to be successful. Even if this were not the case, he did not consider parliament as bound to attend implicitly to the sentiments of the people. Occasions might arise when it would be the duty of that assembly to act in opposition to public opinion. In an instance which might readily be recollected, the legislature, by disregarding the popular wish for reform, had saved the nation. The better wisdom of the community might be supposed to reside in the parliament, so as to render frequent appeals to the people unnecessary.—Of the evils with which an union, according to the last speaker, threatened Ireland, the ministerial orator had no apprehensions; for he was convinced, that the measure would extinguish rather than produce evil, and would highly promote the general interest. He did not think that British influence would improperly or injuriously predominate. The Irish would enjoy a fair proportion of legislative power; and their interests would be as much regarded as those of their British neighbours. That the English constitution would be endangered by the introduction of Irish members, there was no reason to apprehend; for the mode of electing the representatives of the commons would
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not lead them into subserviency to the crown ; and the peers, retaining their seats for life, would be as independent as any of the English nobility.

On a division, only three peers (the earl of Derby and the lords Holland and King) voted against the court, while 82 supported the motion. The three first articles were then proposed in the committee, and received the assent of the peers.

In the house of commons, on the same day, the debate was opened by Mr. JONES, who renewed his opposition to the union in the strongest terms ; but could not prevail on the house to adopt his feelings.

Mr. PITT rose as soon as a committee was formed, and exerted his eloquence in defending and illustrating the scheme. After a declamatory preface, similar to his former effusions on this subject, he passed over those articles which preceded the adjustment of the parliamentary representation, and discussed the propriety of allowing one hundred members to sit for Ireland in the imperial house of commons. He was sensible of the difficulty of finding a precise ground upon which a just estimate of this point might be formed ; but he was the less anxious about it, as the particular number was not very important. If there should be a sufficient number of representatives to make known the local wants, state the interests, and convey the sentiments ; of that part of the empire, the impartiality and collective wisdom of the united parliament would ensure a due attention to the general security and welfare. Population alone would not form a good criterion ; but, if it should be combined with the idea of the proportional contributions of the two countries to the public exigencies, the result might be fairly applied to the present occasion. It would allow more than five for Great-Britain to one for Ireland ; and thus

100 members might be deemed a satisfactory number for the latter country.—The mode of selection was the next point of consideration. It was not the wish of the ministry, said Mr. Pitt, to augment by this arrangement the influence of the crown: the selection adopted by the parliament of Ireland might rather be thought favorable to the popular interest. The members for counties and the principal cities would be sixty-eight; the rest would be deputed by towns the most considerable in population and wealth. Thus the choice would provide both for the security of the landed interest and for the convenience of local information; and, as the proposed addition would not be accompanied with any change in the internal form of British representation, it would not alarm the enemies of innovation. Whatever were the opinions which he formerly entertained on the subject of parliamentary reform, he was not ashamed to acknowledge that he now thought it imprudent and hazardous to make any attempt of that kind. When he reflected that the spirit of reform had led to mischievous changes and dangerous subversions, he dreaded the effects of political experiment. When he considered also, that, amidst the late fiery trials, the constitution of this country had remained pure, untouched in its vital principles; that it had supported itself against open attacks as well as against insidious machinations; that it had disappointed the hopes of France, and baffled the efforts of jacobinism; and that, during the whole contest, it had retained the confidence of the nation; he should think that he deserved strong censure, if he should attempt, in the vain hope of improvement, to disturb a system which had been found sufficient, in perilous times, for the protection of the general interest and the maintenance of public security and happiness.

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As it might be wished that very few of the members thus sent from Ireland should hold places under the crown, he proposed that the number, for the present, should be limited to twenty, and that the imperial parliament should afterwards regulate this point as circumstances might suggest.

The number of peers who should represent the whole body of the Irish nobility, might, he said, be properly fixed at thirty-two. Four would suffice to inform the parliament of the state of the church; and the rest would form a fair proportion, considered with reference to the case of Scotland and to the number of delegates from the commons of Ireland. The election of the temporal peers for life he recommended as a mode more conformable to the general spirit of the establishment of nobles, than that which was settled at the Scottish union. The right reserved for Irish peers to sit in the house of commons as representatives of the counties or towns of Great-Britain, he was likewise disposed to approve, as, without violating the constitution, it would furnish them with opportunities of acquiring political and legislative experience, which certainly would not render them less qualified for serving their country in a higher parliamentary assembly. The permission of creating new peers of Ireland he also justified; for, though in Scotland the peerage might maintain itself for a very long course of time without any accession, from the great extent of inheritance allowed by the generality of the patents, there was a risque of such a diminution of the number of Hibernian peers, from the limitation of the right of succession, as might at no very distant period render the election individual.

In the article respecting the church, he noticed the clause introduced by the parliament of Ireland, providing for

for the presence of the clergy of that country at convocations which might be holden in this island. This he pronounced a reasonable addition ; and the propriety of leaving to the imperial legislature the discussion of the claims of the catholics would at the same time, he thought, be generally allowed.

The next article, he said, would grant a general freedom of trade, with only such exceptions as might secure vested capital, and prevent a great shock to any particular manufacture, or to popular prejudice. It was stipulated that almost all prohibitions should be repealed, and that only protecting duties to a small amount should be imposed on a few articles. If the British manufacturers should sustain partial loss in consequence of any of the new regulations, their liberality would induce them to consider it as compensated by general advantage.

He then argued in support of the equitable nature of the regulations of finance between the countries ; but we need not state his remarks, as they were similar to those of lord Castlereagh ; nor is it necessary to report those invectives against the opposers of the union, with which he concluded his speech.

Mr. GREY was not disposed to analyse the articles, as he had insuperable objections to the principle of the measure, to the time in which it was brought forward, and to the means used for its accomplishment. The assent of the people, he thought, was requisite to give it full sanction and complete effect. It was said that the public voice was in its favor, after a fair appeal to the unbiassed sense of the nation. Nineteen counties were said to have signified a wish for its adoption ; and he believed that addresses had really been presented from.

from that number of shires: but by whom they were signed he did not exactly know, though it was understood that they had been procured at meetings not regularly convened, and promoted by the personal exertions of a governor who, to the powerful influence of the crown, added the terrors of martial law. To speak of the uncontrolled opinion of the community, in such a case, was absurd; and the assertion reminded him of the conduct of the duke of Buckingham (mentioned by an illustrious dramatist), who, taking advantage of the shouts of a few of his followers and other interested persons at a public meeting, affected to regard that applause as a proof of the general concurrence of the assembly. — Against the union the petitions were very numerous; and they were more honorably voted, and more respectable from the signatures, than the ministerial addresses. They were the produce of twenty-seven counties; and the chief towns of the kingdom had furnished many of the number. From a comparison of these with the addresses, and an unprejudiced observation of the state of affairs in Ireland, it might be fairly concluded, that the greater part of the nation disapproved the scheme. The parliamentary majority, of which the courtiers boasted, would not have been obtained, if placemen had been debarred from voting, and if all undue influence, abuse of authority, and the supply of forced vacancies in the house of commons with dependent voters, had been avoided.

As Mr. Grey was diffuse in his remarks on the union with Scotland, it may be expected that we should give more than a very brief report of this part of his speech. After an attentive survey of the proceedings in that business, he declared that he could see no sufficient analogy

analogy between the circumstances of that time and those of the present to induce him to entertain a strong confidence of the eventual benefits of the new scheme. The opposition of the Scots, perhaps, equaled in violence that of the Irish; and this seemed to be the only point of resemblance. There was no physical impediment to the northern union. The two countries were so situated as to require only one executive administration; and a complete identification was also practicable in financial arrangements. But such an identity of regulation could not take place between Ireland and Great-Britain. There must still be a separate government and a distinct treasury; and there could be no security for the forbearance of oppression with regard to Ireland, as she would be at the mercy of Britain, whose attention to her own interest might sometimes prompt her to make an ill use of her power. In imposing taxes, four-fifths of an assembly might not be very unwilling to increase the burthens of the other fifth, when such demands would not affect the exactors. It might be thought uncandid to throw out such insinuations; but those who were already harassed with difficulties and misfortunes might be inclined (such was the frequent disposition of human nature) to bring others to their own level. He supported his allegation of the obstacles which the necessity of a separate government for Ireland would throw in the way of a close union, by the authority of lord Somers, who had argued against such distinctness of administration, as likely to produce much mischief.

The basis of ministerial argument, he said, was the danger arising from the continuance of the present system. That in this point of view there was any similitude between the compared cases, he strongly denied.

denied. The parliaments of Scotland and England were at open variance. The former prohibited the importation of English commodities, and enacted that the crown should not descend to the same person who should occupy the English throne, unless various demands should be granted. The latter ordained that the Scots should be treated as aliens, and that all trade with them should be suspended; Preparations were even made for hostility; but the English ministry, unwilling to proceed to sanguinary extremities, proposed to the Scots an incorporative union. The means used to promote the acceptance of this offer were not strictly justifiable; but acquiescence was at length obtained. It must excite the indignation of every honest man to observe that, under very different circumstances, more unjustifiable arts had been used to accomplish a measure altogether unnecessary. Had Ireland checked or prohibited British trade, or had she refused to adopt the same rules of regal succession? On the contrary, did there not exist between the countries an amity which nothing but the folly of ministers could diminish or derange, an affection which nothing but their violence could destroy?

It was affirmed, that the union had been productive of extraordinary benefit to Scotland; and reference had been made to the state of that country at the beginning and near the close of the century. But this was a very fallacious mode of arguing. Almost every country in Europe had undergone a great improvement in the course of that time; and it was reasonable to suppose that North-Britain would have made no inconsiderable progress in prosperity without the aid of an incorporation with England and Wales. The union was so far from promoting its improve-

ment in point of trade and industry, that the linen manufacture declined after that event. Indeed, little advance was made before the rebellion of the year 1745. The abolition of the heritable jurisdictions was the first measure that gave a strong impulse to the spirit of manufacturing exertion and commercial enterprise in Scotland. From that time the prosperity of the country had increased, but not in so great a degree as that of Ireland during the same period.

That the union soon became popular among the Scots, had been asserted in a former debate. The alleged instance was drawn from the year 1715, when the pretender found it expedient to suppress that part of his manifesto in which he had promised to re-establish the Scottish parliament. This was affirmed on the authority of a manuscript left by sir John Clerk; but it ought to be considered, that it was unsupported by other testimony, and that sir John was connected by marriage with the duke of Queensbury, the chief of the Scottish unionists: it was therefore no more surprising that such a man should represent the measure as popular, than that lord Castlereagh or some of his friends and relatives should speak of the new project of union as being supported by the general voice of Ireland. It appeared from some parliamentary proceedings, and from the strongest evidence, that the change was long unpopular in Scotland, and that all who proposed a restoration of the old government were applauded and encouraged.

It was not the union that promoted the prosperity or secured the tranquillity of Scotland. As it was obtruded on the people, it increased that discontent which the former conduct of the court had excited; and a liberal system of policy, without such a measure, would

would have better evinced the regard of the English government to the welfare of the country.

Having thus attacked, though not refuted, the arguments drawn from the Scotch union in favor of the present plan, Mr. Grey recommended the application of an immediate remedy to the disorders and grievances of Ireland. A wise and conciliatory system, he said, would tend more effectually to allay the distractions of the country, and dissipate the dangers with which it was threatened from foreign or domestic enemies, than any attempt to incorporate its legislature with that of Great-Britain.

The catholics, of whose pretensions so much had been said, might in his opinion be relieved from remaining disabilities by a separate parliament, without the risque of the prevalence of their party. Those who imagined that such concessions would lead to a change of property in the country, did not consider that the catholics who would be called to the exercise of legislative functions would be men who had acquired property by industry, and who would have an interest in protecting those titles on which the security of their recent possessions depended. This reasoning is in our judgement weak ; for, in case of a resumption of property, these sectaries would gain much more than they would lose. So few, however, would be able to obtain seats in parliament, that the dreaded resumption would be a very improbable event.

On the proposed terms Mr. Grey did not enlarge. He seemed inclined to approve the regulations of commerce and revenue ; but he apprehended that the introduction of 100 new members into the house of commons would add to that influence which was already too powerful, as the expence of attendance and

of contested elections would concur with other circumstances to render the Irish representatives dependent on the crown.

Whatever might be the merits of the conditions, he said, the great preliminary point was to ascertain the sentiments of the Irish nation. If this knowledge could not be accurately obtained by examining the petitions which had been or might be presented, an appeal might be made to the people by a dissolution of the parliament. To carry so important a measure into effect against their will, would be an imitation of those jacobinical proceedings which had been so strongly reprobated. The maxim of treating others as we would wish them to act toward us, ought to be cherished in the hearts of all, not only as a rule of social behaviour but as a principle of political conduct.

‘ While the love of liberty is engraven in our breasts [these were nearly his words], we cannot surely forget what we owe to the interests and to the rights of others. We are bound both by duty and policy to respect and to promote the freedom and the happiness of mankind. To encourage an invasion of those sacred rights in others, would be to sap the foundation on which our own must rest. We cannot bestow upon the government that power which is necessary to subdue the freedom of others, without arming it with weapons that may be fatal to our own liberty. We cannot assist in overturning the liberty of another nation, without extinguishing that zeal which is necessary for the maintenance of our own rights. If such an attempt should succeed, it would place at the disposal of the crown a number of abject instruments that might be employed against the privileges of their fellow-subjects. “ I rejoice,” said the earl

earl of Chatham, "that the^aAmericans have resisted; for three millions of slaves in America would have been fit tools to overthrow the liberties of Britain."² For the same reason I rejoice that the Irish have shewn a firm determination to preserve their constitutional rights and liberties; and I trust that ministers will not be able by undue means to triumph over their spirited opposition.'

When Mr. Grey had proposed an address to his majesty, desiring him to suspend all proceedings on the union till the opinions of the people of Ireland should be ascertained, Mr. Johnstone entered fully into the subject, without novelty of elucidation; Mr. Nicholl, though not accustomed to give his support to the statesman who planned the union, spoke strongly in its favor; sir Gregory Page Turner added the efficacy of his eloquence (not indeed very considerable) to the force of the minister's oratory; and major-general Loftus was also an advocate for the wise and salutary scheme. But Dr. Laurence opposed it as unjust and impolitic under the existing circumstances of Ireland; and Mr. Sheridan, on the supposition of the strong dissent of the Hibernian nation, deprecated the prosecution of a measure which, if it should be carried into effect by corruption or violence, would become the fatal source of discontent and rebellion; adding, that the only standard round which the passions and prejudices of the Irish would rally, was that which would lead them to the recovery of a constitution that was thus foully and oppressively to be wrested from them.

Mr. Dundas would not admit that the Irish in general dissented from the scheme; but Mr. Tierney was convinced of their repugnance. Lord Carysfort affirmed, that the unionists in the Irish parliament had

a much greater extent of property than their adversaries, and that the judging portion of the people approved the project.—‘If that be the case,’ exclaimed Mr. Grey, ‘no risque can be incurred by the dissolution which I have recommended.’—Mr. Pitt, however, dreaded the danger of appealing to a community influenced (as he thought) by factious leaders, and was satisfied with the assent of the parliament.

Mr. Grey’s motion being rejected by a majority of 206, the three first stipulations were voted. On the succeeding day, the examination of the three next articles being postponed, the seventh was brought forward. Dr. Laurence was the most sturdy opponent of the minister in this discussion. It did not appear to him, that the relative situation of the two countries was a fair criterion of their respective ability for the payment of taxes. The value of their exports and imports, he said, furnished only an imperfect view of their relative prosperity, and rather served to point out their mercantile than their landed wealth; nor did the consumption of the various articles enumerated in the resolution form a certain standard for judging of the amount of contribution which ought to be levied. If the income tax in this country should be continued, and the sinking fund should operate considerably to the reduction of the national debt, taxes to a certain amount would be abolished, while Ireland, which could not bear the former impost, would be subjected to new taxes according to the agreement.

Mr. Pitt considered the criterion as the most reasonable test that could be applied in the present case, though it might not be indisputably correct; and he asked, whether it would be expedient, in the hope of finding a better criterion, to postpone the union, when
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by such delay the disparity between the countries would become greater.

When Mr. Hobhouse had controverted the ratio assumed by the Irish secretary, arguing that it ought to be $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, and not $7\frac{1}{2}$ to one, Dr. Laurence animadverted on the unprecedented injustice of allowing the British members in one instance, and the Irish in another, to vote away the money of those with whom they had not a common interest, and suggested the propriety of a separate imposition of taxes for Great-Britain by British representatives, and for Ireland by Irish members. This might have been deemed a reasonable proposition, if the learned gentleman had connected it with the idea of exploding the ratio of contribution; but, as it was accompanied with an allowance of the proportion adjusted by the parliament of Ireland, there was a sufficient security against partiality and injustice.

The premier was willing to trust to the equity of the representatives of the two countries for their strict observance of the standard; and, even if no proportion should be previously settled, he was confident that the British members would be as attentive to the benefit of Ireland, and *vice versâ*, as the members for Devonshire or Yorkshire now are to the local interests of Kent or Essex.

Sir William Young stated that taxes, not affecting Scotland, had been imposed by the existing parliament; and that, as the Scottish members had full liberty of voting on those occasions, the case was not without precedent. Sir William Grant (the solicitor-general) also alleged, that this partial imposition of taxes was consistent with parliamentary practice. Mr. Banks condemned the general scheme rather than objected to the article under discussion. Lord Hawkesbury lamented

that the commerce and revenue of Ireland could not immediately be identified with those of Great Britain; but consoled himself with the prospect of the gradual approach of that identity, and of a more complete union than the present circumstances would admit.

The question being now put, the financial article was sanctioned by the commons. It was discussed by the peers on the 25th of April, before they took the fourth into consideration. Earl Fitzwilliam, conceiving, from a passage in the article, that the oppressive tax upon income was to be permanent, proposed the substitution of words of a different import. Lord Grenville denied that such a conclusion could justly be drawn; and lord Auckland represented the passage as intimating only, that, if at the expiration of twenty years an income tax should exist, it should form one of the *criteria* of the financial ability of each country. The earl of Caernarvon, however, did not wish to have this tax at all implicated in the measure, which, he feared, might be rendered unpopular by the introduction of such a topic. The amendment was exploded without a division, as was also another which was suggested by the same nobleman, similar to the late proposition of Dr. Laurence; and the article was honored with adoption.

When a renewal of deliberation was proposed in the house of commons, Mr. GREY rose to intimate his wish, that, in discussing the share of representation which ought to be allowed to the Irish, the committee might be instructed to consider of the most efficacious means of securing the independence of parliament. Entering into the general subject of reform, he steered between the extremes of speculative extravagance and an obstinate aversion to all change or alteration. He argued, that

that one object of the English constitution was to obtain such a composition of the representative body as would qualify its members to speak the sense of the people; and, therefore, that population was the principal basis of representation. This basis having in the lapse of time been injured by neglect and abuse, it was one of the dictates of sober policy to remedy the disorder, and to restore the practice of representation to its original purity. It might be said, that we ought to be content with the securities provided for freedom at the Revolution, without seeking any alteration or reform. But it appeared to him to be a fair (and, on the agitation of the scheme of union, a seasonable) object of inquiry, whether the bulwarks with which our liberties were then invested still remained unimpaired. When he referred to English history for the ascertainment of the disputed point, he was constrained to believe that those bulwarks had been shaken by the encroachments of the crown before the year 1782, and that the great additions to the amount of the public revenue, and the enormous increase of our civil and military establishments, had furnished since that time the sources of an influence, which, unless it should be checked by a speedy reform, threatened to subvert the balance of the constitution, and to absorb all the power of the state. The house of commons, instead of being the organ of the popular voice, had long manifested an implicit devotion to the will of the court; and the people had the poor consolation of finding, that they could only influence the measures of their rulers in the same manner with those nations which had no constitutional representatives of their general sentiments, no established guardians of their interests.

To check the alarming progress of courtly influence,
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was the duty of the assembly which he addressed ; and it was also bound by interest to interfere on the occasion, as timely reform alone could prevent the danger of critical changes and violent innovations. He was afraid that the proposed addition of Irish members would throw too great weight into that scale which he wished the house to deprive of its preponderancy. Many, from the nature of their election, would be induced to adhere to the court. Some, from being placemen—others, from interested expectancy—and some, from a wish of obtaining greater advantages for their country—would join the ministerial phalanx. To remove in some degree the grounds of apprehension, he proposed that only eighty-five members should be deputed from Ireland, and that forty of the most insignificant British boroughs should be disfranchised. This scheme, he thought, would not give the votaries of the crown any just cause of alarm ; and it claimed the support of every patriotic member. He did not, however, make a motion to that effect, but only moved the above-mentioned general instruction to the committee.

LORD HAWKESBURY immediately signified his dissent from the motion. He contended, that, from the earliest period of our history to the present time, the popular influence in our government, far from having decreased, had been gradually increasing ; that representation was, originally, no part of our constitution ; that the great council of the nation consisted solely of tenants in *capite* from the crown ; but when, in consequence of the division of property, the inferior barons became too numerous to attend conveniently in person, they were allowed out of their own body to send representatives ; and that, as this was the origin of the commons of England, the principle of our representation

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was property. At a subsequent period, he added, particular boroughs were authorised to send members to parliament, solely by the will of the sovereign ; and, from the æra of such elections, it did not appear that the representation was at any time more popular in principle than at present. He allowed, that, if a practical grievance to a considerable extent could be proved, or if it could be shown that the popular feeling was not sufficiently impressed upon a house which virtually represented the people, there would be a proper ground for some parliamentary reform : but to make an attempt of that kind without evident necessity would be highly dangerous ; and when all the effects of good government, with the particular blessings which this country had long enjoyed, were properly considered, it was not surprising that so strong a prejudice should be entertained against any alteration in the frame of our government. The best evidences of the excellence of a government were the ‘existence of internal tranquillity and civil liberty, the power of defence against a foreign enemy, and progressive wealth and prosperity.’ In each of these respects the British dominions were so eminently favored, that he saw no reason for a parliamentary reform. He was of opinion, that, with very few exceptions, the parliament had for a century spoken the sentiments of the people, and that during no part of that time had it been so completely in unison with the feelings of the community, as from the year 1782. Having mentioned the well-known vote which opposed the augmentation of the influence of the crown, he observed, that a bill had passed in that year for the reduction of the dreaded influence, and that a spirit of internal reform had prevailed in the administration from that time to the present. In 1778, the number of
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placemen and contractors who were members of this house amounted to 118 ; but, in the current year, only 52 could be enumerated ; whence it appeared, that within twenty-two years there had been a diminution of the influence of the crown, arising from places and contracts, by more than one half.

Applying the question to the case of union with Ireland, he was ready to admit, that he should act inconsistently with the principles which he had stated, if he did not, looking to the subject abstractedly, regret the necessity of making any change in the constitution of the house of commons. If the question related to Great-Britain alone, no one could be more hostile than he was to any innovation in the constitution of parliament ; but a regard for the peace and security of Ireland, and for the integrity and strength of the British empire, rendered it necessary to have recourse to measures which on any other ground he should think highly objectionable. To incorporate the two countries, it might be indispensably requisite that some change should take place in the parliamentary constitution ; and the scheme of representation proposed for Ireland, by which sixty-four members out of one hundred were to be chosen for counties, seemed comparatively liable to little censure. It was expedient to weigh and compare evils. ‘ We must recollect,’ he said, ‘ that a great good can rarely be obtained without running some risque. An increase of numbers to this house is certainly an inconvenience : but an increase to a limited extent appears to me to be in itself a less evil than any other change which can be proposed ; and such was the opinion of many wise men, even at a time when no necessity of the present nature existed for it. I am sensible that government is a machine of

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so delicate a structure, that it is impossible either to add or take away the number of one hundred members without some apprehensions. But when we consider that an addition of members of one description necessarily grows out of the measure of union ; when we reflect on the manner in which these members are to be chosen, and on the impossibility of forming beforehand any decided opinion of the precise effect which their introduction into this house will produce ; it is surely more wise, with the experience we have of the conduct of this house, with the knowledge of its character, and the proofs of its wisdom, to leave it in other respects constituted as it is, and to take our chance of the inconvenience of an increase of our numbers, rather than make an alteration so complicated as that which the honorable gentleman has proposed. I am not surprised that the zealots for parliamentary reform should take this opportunity to make a motion in its favor ; but I think that this very measure of union will be considered, by those who are friends to reform only on moderate principles, as a ground for renouncing or suspending their opinion ; and I am perfectly convinced, that every person who entertains the same sentiments with me upon the subject of reform, and who considers the great benefits which the country enjoys under the constitution of parliament, as established at present, will feel it desirable, that the change which must be made in our constitution, on this occasion, should be no greater than is indispensably necessary.'

Adverting to the Revolution, he contended that the power of the house of commons had increased since that event, and that the influence of the people over that assembly had been also augmented. ' This influence,' he said, ' has increased from many causes which
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are accidental ; from the general diffusion of wealth and knowledge, and from the facility of communication between the most distant parts of the country ; but it has peculiarly increased of late years, from the doors of this house being open to the people, and from the constant publication of the debates. These last circumstances have had the effect of making the people parties, as it were, to all the measures of parliament, even before they are decided, in a degree and to an extent which many wise men have thought objectionable.

‘ Upon the whole, it appears that the influence of the people upon this house and upon all the branches of government, and the influence of the house upon the crown, are much more considerable than at any former period. This increase of popular power I am far from regretting. I feel the privileges of this house to be the best security of the liberties of the people ; I know them to have been a principal cause of our glory and prosperity, and the great source of that energy and strength which have enabled us to support the present arduous contest. Under the existing constitution of the house of commons, we have experienced, during the last eighteen years, the greatest increase of prosperity and power: look at the ten years of peace that preceded the present war ; you will find a period of tranquillity, prosperity, and commercial improvement, totally unexampled in the history of any other country. Look to the last seven years ; you will see what gigantic exertions the country has been able to make ; what energy, what vigor it has displayed ; how, by means of its internal strength and resources, it has risen in spite of all the attempts of its enemies ; and how it will yet save the world if the world will be saved. We have seen these things ; and can we then refrain from cherishing

cherishing the constitution, and from feeling a repugnance to any change, which circumstances do not render unavoidable?

The evils resulting from factions and party spirit are the necessary consequences of a free government, and we cannot expect to enjoy the blessings, without partaking of the inconveniences of such a system. No good in this world is pure and unmixed. Factions are the evils of free governments; but experience has proved to us, that, with a people of the reflecting character and sober sense of the people of England, the evils are inconsiderable in proportion to the benefits. There may, however, be countries differently circumstanced, where the disadvantages may more than counterbalance the advantages, and may even make the enjoyment of those advantages, or of any other good, impracticable (for we must not adopt the principles of the new philosophy, which, as they assume that all men are equal, seem also to assume that all nations are the same). Ireland appears to be in a situation nearly of this kind. The religious feuds that have subsisted there for so many years, the state of the public mind in that country, the jealousies on the subject of property, the recollection of the past, and the apprehensions for the future, make it impossible for Ireland to bear the collision of contending factions, without ruin to her peace, and ultimate destruction to her government. Let this union take place, all Irish party will be extinguished; there will then be no parties, but the parties of the British empire. The strength of Great-Britain, the constitution of her parliament, will, I am persuaded, enable her to keep all such parties in subjection, and to secure to every member of the empire the possession of its religion, its property, and its

its laws. Such an union will give integrity and harmony to our whole system, and will render Ireland, in any future contest, if ever we shall be engaged in one of so arduous a nature as the present, (which God avert!) a source of incalculable energy, strength, and support to this kingdom.'

Sir WILLIAM YOUNG differed from Mr. Grey with regard to the expediency of disfranchising the small boroughs; and, deeming the motion derogatory from the honor of the house, as it implied a doubt of the attention of the parliament to its duty and its interests, he moved the previous question.

Mr. PITT concurred with the baronet; and, satisfied with lord Hawkesbury's 'very able and judicious speech,' he would not suggest a single idea in addition to the remarks of his friend.

Dr. Laurence and Mr. Wilberforce supported Mr. Grey's motion, as it tended to enforce that caution which they considered as essentially necessary for the preservation of the independence of the house of commons. Mr. Bouverie and Mr. Hawkins Browne pronounced contrary sentiments; and, on a division, the minister triumphed by a majority of 142.

Another debate arose, when Mr. Pitt had moved in the committee that no more than twenty persons holding offices under the crown should sit as members for Ireland in the lower house of the first united parliament. Mr. Grey thought one-fifth of the whole too large a proportion, and therefore moved that the number should be restricted to ten. The minister pretended, that too great a scrupulosity in this respect would be inconsistent with the candor, liberality, and dignity of the house. Mr. Banks, dreading an augmentation of the influence of the crown, recommended a reduction

tion of the number. Mr. Windham was willing to leave the final settlement of the number of placements to the imperial legislature ; and, in the mean time, he thought it reasonable to allow twenty. Mr. Harrison wished to know whether, beside the twenty placemen, other members were to be suffered to hold 'latent offices,' without losing their seats. Mr. Pitt gave an answer not very explicit, but apparently affirmative. After some desultory remarks from other gentlemen, Mr. Grey's proposition was exploded, and the fourth article was adopted, with the minister's addition to it.

Returning to the upper house, we find lord Grenville, on the 28th, supporting the fourth article. The precedent of the Scottish union, he said, had been followed as closely as the difference of circumstances would allow. Some of his hearers, on reference to that settlement, might deem the proportion of Irish representatives too great ; but the well-founded expectation of a great degree of commercial prosperity and consequent increase of population would perhaps induce them to relinquish such an objection. Upon the whole, the ratio was so adjusted, as to exclude at once the idea of a servile dependence on the crown and the principles of a wild and varying democracy. There would be three points of difference, he added, between the Irish and Scottish peers. The former, when chosen, would hold their seats till death, except the spiritual peers, who, if they should be deputed for life, would be too long absent from their sees. This permanence of the elected noblemen seemed better calculated than a temporary delegation to guard against the effects of undue influence and control. The second point was the eligibility of the peers of Ireland to a seat among

the commons of the empire. A considerable number of those peers had so little property or influence in that country, as to have scarcely any chance of being deputed to a representation of the peerage; and the election of such individuals as commoners would strengthen the connexion of classes, and constitute a desirable union of feeling and interest between the houses of parliament. The third point, the eventual creation of new Irish peers, would be necessary for the prevention of too rapid a progress towards the extinction of the peerages.

LORD MULGRAVE moved for the omission of that clause which allowed the Hibernian peers to sit in the house of commons for any of the shires or boroughs of Great-Britain, with a proviso that they should cease to enjoy during that time the privileges of the peerage. Such a regulation, he said, tended to break down the bulwark between the peers and the commons, and consequently the barrier between the crown and the people; to introduce a confusion of ranks, and promote democratic disorder.

THE LORD-CHANCELLOR defended the clause as reasonable and constitutional. Why, he asked, would it be more degrading for an Irish peer than for the eldest son of the first peer of this kingdom to be tried as a commoner; and would it not be a great hardship for a number of the peers of Ireland to be deprived of the chance of becoming legislators?

The earl of Caernarvon opposed the clause, because it seemed to have a jacobinical tendency; and the earl of Darnley recommended, in this respect, an adherence to the stipulations of the Scottish union.

A plurality of 43 decided in favor of the clause;
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and, in another division, the same majority supported the clause for the occasional creation of new peers of Ireland.

Two days afterwards, a debate arose from a motion of lord HOLLAND, tending to give the catholics a prospect of the abolition of the disabilities to which they are subject both in Ireland and in Great-Britain. In this country, a regard to justice, he said, dictated such relief: in the other, it was not only a matter of justice, but was essential to public tranquillity, and would contribute to reconcile the minds of the majority of the people to the new project.

The marquis of LANSDOWNE did not disapprove the motion, though he differed from the mover on the subject of the union. After a frequent and close deliberation, he was convinced of the wisdom and policy of the general measure, and thought it highly honorable to the projectors. The chief blemishes, he thought, were to be found in the confined mode of election for some of the boroughs; but these were specks in a brilliant sun.

Earl Fitzwilliam justified the motion as conciliatory and highly expedient: but lord Mulgrave said, that, as the parliaments of both kingdoms had already agreed to the postponement of the catholic question, which, they conceived, would be more temperately and wisely discussed after an union, it was unnecessary and improper to prejudge the topic. The lords Boringdon and Hobart spoke nearly to the same effect; and with these peers the earl of Liverpool concurred.

The earl of MOIRA declared that the objections which he had urged to an union were in a great measure superseded by the late determination of the Irish parliament; and he was ready to admit that the points of detail were founded, for the most part, on just and

equitable principles. Apprehending that the present motion might obstruct the success of the scheme, he wished it to be withdrawn or discountenanced.

LORD GRENVILLE was of opinion, that the question would be best determined by the united parliament, and that the decision of that legislature, even if it should be erroneous, would be attended with much less inconvenience than a similar decision would produce, if pronounced by the two parliaments under the present system.

The motion was then superseded by the previous question.

As the woollen-manufacturers of Great-Britain were alarmed at the prospect of great loss and injury, if a free exportation of the raw material to Ireland should be allowed, petitions were presented to both houses against that part of the commercial article; and witnesses were examined at the bar in support of the allegations of the complaining artisans, in whose behalf the counsellors Law and Plumer also exerted their abilities. Continuing, however, to entertain a different opinion, the minister, on the 1st of May, urged the committee to adopt the resolution.

MR. PEELE dreaded the decline of some of the British manufactures from the competition of the Irish, and wished that the union might be productive of more reciprocal advantage, than, from different parts of the plan, there was cause to expect.

MR. WILBERFORCE harangued the committee, at considerable length, in favor of the petitioning manufacturers. He did not, however, consider himself on this occasion as arguing for Great-Britain against Ireland, but rather for the benefit of both countries. If the union should be accomplished, the prosperity of
Ireland

Ireland would be that of Great-Britain ; and, as a part interested in the welfare of the whole, she could not but suffer in consequence of any change that might prove injurious to an important branch of our commercial system.—It was not proposed or desired by the body of men whose cause he supported, that they should after an union retain all their present advantages : they were willing to resign their protecting duty, and merely requested that each country might enjoy the use of all the wool which it might produce. As all the wool produced in Britain was insufficient for the exigencies of the manufacture, it was obvious that the exportation of it would be a serious grievance ; and such an indulgence to Ireland was not necessary to render the union advantageous to its commercial inhabitants, as their interests would be amply promoted without it.—He referred to the evidence of some of the witnesses to prove the scarcity of wool, and demonstrate the impolicy of suffering an exportation which would not be confined to Ireland, but would clandestinely be extended to the rest of Europe. He concluded with moving an amendment which should except wool from the number of commodities freely importable from one country into the other.

Mr. PITT maintained, that, if any transfer of manufacture should result from the permission of exporting wool, it would be gradual and inconsiderable ; that any void which it might occasion would be much more than filled up by the great increase of our trade in this article ; that we had no reason to apprehend a scarcity of the commodity, or dread the rivalry of the Irish in the manufacture ; and that his friend's proposal would be an unnecessary deviation from that liberal

principle of free intercourse which was the intended basis of the union.

Two divisions followed: in one, a majority of 80 appeared against the amendment, the numbers being 53 and 133; in the other, 13 voted for the delay of the report to the 5th of May, and 58 against it.

When the report was brought up on the 2d, Dr. LAURENCE, with his usual fluency, stated various objections to the measure. He exhorted the house to examine with profound attention and scrupulous accuracy the grounds on which it stood, as it was not a treaty or compact which might be annulled if it should prove disadvantageous, but was to remain irrevocable in all its essential points. Convinced as he was of its impolicy, he could not conscientiously suffer it to pass without an exposure of its evil tendency. It was very different, he said, from the union between England and Scotland. That treaty had been justly described as 'comprehensive of every good to both countries; excluding all manner of preference or disparity of parts, and abhorring all things injurious or diminishing to either.' It involved 'a full coalition, a general incorporation, of nations, of interests, of power, and of safety; an identity of circumstances and of sympathies.' The two nations became 'one and the same body, with the same head, life, nutriment, point, and period.' Their 'constitution, customs, trade, and manners, were blended, digested, and concocted, for the mutual, common, undistinguished good, growth, and health, of the one whole united body.' How inapplicable was this description to the present scheme, which, indeed, was no more comparable to the former, than the daubing of a sign-post to the painting of a Raphael!

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He took an ample survey of the different articles, and contrasted them with those of the Scottish union: but, in the detail into which he thus entered, it is unnecessary to follow him. Few, if any, points of the scheme were considered by him as free from objection; and a perseverance in it, he apprehended, would excite great dissatisfaction and discord.

The parliamentary part of the plan he could not persuade himself to approve. The intervention of the sea, he said, would be a material inconvenience, particularly when the two houses should be convoked at a fortnight's notice. A crisis of danger might occur before the Irish members would be able to reach Westminster; and, in cases of invasion or rebellion, to which Ireland is most exposed, the want of a resident parliament in that country would be seriously felt. The proposed mode of trying contested elections in Ireland, by a delegation from the imperial legislature, would be attended with various difficulties; and the idea of separating questions of law from those of fact would in many cases be impracticable.—To the mode of fixing the number of Irish representatives he faintly objected. Contribution, he thought, was a sufficient guide in this respect without including population; and the proportion was not accurately adjusted on the assumed grounds. He strongly censured the intended purchase of boroughs as involving an acknowledgement of corruption, and as tending to form a pernicious precedent. He dreaded an extension of the influence of the crown, which would have a commanding effect over the reduced number of Irish members. He animadverted on the extraordinary predicament to which the peers would be subjected by the new regulations:

they might be peers one day, and commoners the next, thus exhibiting an anomaly of character which could not easily be defined.

The means of promoting the measure were not, in his opinion, the most laudable or constitutional; and the boasted majority did not include the most respectable portion of the parliament. A considerable number of those who had voted for the scheme were palpably influenced by the crown; and the freedom of deliberation was checked by the presence of the army. For these and other reasons, he moved that the business should be postponed for three months: indeed, he wished that the project might be abandoned, as harmony and order could not be expected to arise from jarring and discordant elements.

Mr. MORRIS affirmed, that all who had the interest and happiness of both countries at heart were warm advocates for the conjunction of the two parliaments; and that, if any precedent could confirm their opinion in favor of the scheme, it was that of the union with Scotland, which had been vehemently opposed in its progress, but had been found highly contributive to the general prosperity of Britain.

The honorable Mr. RYDER admitted, that a complete or perfect union could not at first be expected; but he did not consider this objection as a sufficient reason for desisting from an attempt which might be in some degree successful; still less did he think it prudent finally to relinquish it. The imperfections of the scheme, he was confident, would be greatly overbalanced by its obvious advantages.

Mr. BANKES was still of opinion, that the scheme would be inefficacious as a measure of union, and
particu-

particularly hazardous from the dissatisfaction with which it would be received by the catholics, whose views of power it would ultimately disappoint, even though the imperial parliament might accede to their present claims.

Colonel Wood and sir Richard Carr Glyn supported the general principle of the measure. Sir William Young contended that delay would be dangerous, and that nothing but an union would render the two countries permanently prosperous and happy. Mr. Nicholl did not approve every part of the plan; but, conceiving that it would enable the government to relieve the catholics with safety, and that it would thus allay the bitterness of religious dissension, he was willing to promote its success.

The house then ordered the second reading of the reported resolutions, by a division in which only 26 voted against it, and 208 for it.

On the 5th of May, the scheme was again debated in both houses. Lord Grenville was pleased to find that only one class of manufacturers complained of the commercial article, and still more pleased to observe, that even their jealousy was ill-founded. To remove their apprehensions, he maintained that the practice of enclosing had not diminished the breed of sheep; noticed the inconsistency of those who, while they affirmed that less wool had been produced in late years, admitted that the manufacture had increased; and inferred from experience, that the low price of provisions and of labor did not in general invite or foster manufactures. Earl Fitzwilliam expatiated on the importance of the woollen manufacture, and on the benefit which Great-Britain had derived from her superiority in that branch of art; and warned the peers

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of the injury which might arise from the competition of Ireland, whose natural advantages (particularly an abundant supply of water) might enable her to prosecute that manufacture with success. Lord Auckland said, that, as we imported various raw materials from Ireland, it was illiberal to refuse to that country a small supply of our wool; and that the greatest loss which we were in danger of sustaining would not exceed one thirtieth part of the produce of the whole manufacture. This assertion was founded on the estimate of 600,000 pounds, the amount of our annual supply of woollen cloth to the Irish; but his lordship did not reflect on the risque of their endeavours to furnish foreign merchants with that species of cloth, manufactured by themselves. The committee then adopted the commercial clauses and the remaining regulations.

Various motions were made in the house of commons for the supposed improvement of the plan. Dr. Laurence moved for some alterations grounded on his former suggestions relative to the parliamentary article; but his arguments did not produce conviction in the minds of the majority. Mr. Grey, with the same ill success, proposed clauses calculated to render the Irish members independent of the crown, and to reduce their number in case of a diminution of that of the British representatives. Sir William Dolben moved, that all new peers should entail a sufficient estate to secure the independence of their successors: but the motion was rejected as unnecessary. Mr. Tierney wished for a re-commitment of the resolution respecting trade, that the woollen manufacturers of this country might receive an indulgence similar to that which would be granted to the cotton manufacturers of Ireland. Mr.

Pitt,

Pitt, however, would not consent to any deviation from the general principle of union in favor of the former, as it was less requisite for the continuance of their success; and a majority of 92 exploded the motion.

An address was voted on the same day, importing that the commons had observed with unspeakable satisfaction the general conformity of the articles transmitted from Ireland with those which they had voted in the preceding year, and that they were now ready to conclude with the Irish parliament an union upon that foundation. This address was communicated to the peers; and, after a comparison of the resolutions of one house with those of the other assembly, a renewal of debate took place on the 7th, chiefly on the subject of the permission granted to Irish peers to represent British counties or boroughs in the lower house. Lord Romney proposed that all who should thus degrade themselves should be obliged to wave for life the privileges of the peerage. The earls of Caernarvon and Fife, and several other peers, opposed the permission, as tending to violate the constitution, and produce a hazardous confusion of rank and interests; but a plurality of 36 votes sanctioned the clause; and a majority of 33 appeared for that which allowed the creation of new Irish peers. The question respecting wool was again agitated; and the ministry prevailed by a majority of 36.

When it was proposed, on the following day, that the peers should join in the address which the commons had voted, lord Bolton spoke decidedly in favor of the union. He entered fully into the merits of the propositions of 1785, against which, he said, the Irish had conceived an ill-founded prejudice. A similar prejudice existed against the present offers of Great-Britain; but he trusted

trusted that it would not prevent the accomplishment of a project which would be advantageous to this country, and highly beneficial to Ireland. Earl Fitzwilliam objected to several of the articles, and maintained that the plan tended to a disjunction rather than to a real union. Earl Camden and the marquis Townshend argued for the necessity of the measure. The earl of Westmorland attributed the distractions of Ireland to the existing system of government, or to the injudicious mode of administration, and was convinced that an union was the only remedy for the evils under which she had long groaned; but, as he did not place the subject in a new light, we need not give an abstract of his speech. The earl of Darnley concurred with this speaker; while the lords King and Holland maintained, that the measure was more likely to aggravate than cure evils. The marquis of Downshire repeated many of the observations which he had urged in the Irish house of lords; and egotism was, as before, a strong feature in his harangue. Lord Grenville replied, not without ability, to the arguments of the anti-unionists; and the proposal was then adopted by a majority of 47. Some immaterial alterations made by the lords in the resolutions met with the approbation of the other house; and, on the 9th, the joint address was presented to his majesty.

The plan was then transmitted to Ireland; and the parliament of each kingdom proceeded to prepare a bill comprehending the various stipulations and provisions in regular form and perspicuous detail.

CHAP. XIII.

*Adjustment of the Election of the Representatives of Ireland—
Enactment of two Bills for the Completion of the Union—
and also of a Bill for the Compensation of Borough-Proprietors—Prorogation of the two Parliaments.*

AS the attempts of the anti-unionists had been so frequently baffled, it would not have been a matter of astonishment or a ground of blame, if they had at this time relinquished a hopeless contest. They had tried their strength both in and out of parliament; and, though their exertions appear to have been favored and applauded by the major part of the nation, they found themselves unable to break the ranks of the courtiers, or make an effectual impression on the firm phalanx which supported the cause of incorporation. They resolved, however, to persist in parliamentary warfare, and dispute every inch of the remaining ground.

A bill being thought necessary for regulating the election of the representatives of Ireland in the imperial parliament, lord Castlereagh moved for leave to introduce it before the general bill of union. Having noticed the inclination which the house had shown to various modes of parliamentary representation, in preference to an uniform system, he stated the leading principles on which the selection of cities and boroughs had been adjusted,—namely, a regard to property, and the consideration of political, commercial, and local knowledge; and mentioned the produce of the taxes on hearths and on windows, and the number of houses
for

for which hearth-money was no longer paid, as fair *criteria* of wealth and population. On these grounds, he named the following towns—Waterford, Limerick, Belfast, Drogheda, Carrickfergus, Newry, Kilkenny, London-Derry, Galway, Clonmell, Wexford, Armagh, Youghall, Bandon, Dundalk, Kinsale, Lisburne, Sligo, Catherlogh, Ennis, Dungarvan, Down-Patrick, Coleraine, Mallow, Athlone, New-Ross, Tralee, Cashel, Dungannon, Port-Arlington, and Enniskillen. One member for each of these towns, with four for Dublin and Cork, one for the university, and 64 representatives of counties, would, he thought, form the ‘soundest collection of individuals that could be charged with the concerns of a nation;’ and Ireland might safely depend on the wise and patriotic exertions of such legislators, incorporated with an assembly which had preserved the liberty and happiness, and therefore commanded the esteem and affection, of the people of Great-Britain.

The motion was opposed as tending to pledge the house prematurely; but a majority of 55 agreed to the proposal. In the progress of the bill, objections to it were urged with spirit and plausibility; and the whole plan of union was re-attacked. In one of the conversations, Mr. O'Donel produced violent laughter by proposing an insurance-office, in which the country might under-write its representatives, and recommended a clause for securing a fair wind during the voyage. The bill soon passed through the different stages, and, on the 20th of May, it received the assent of the house.

This bill ordained, that, if the king should authorise the present lords and commons of Great-Britain to form a part of the first imperial legislature, the sitting members

members for Dublin and Cork, and for the thirty-two counties of Ireland, should represent the same cities and shires in that parliament; that the written names of the members for the college of the Holy Trinity, for the cities of Waterford and Limerick, and the other towns before-mentioned, should be put into a glass, and successively drawn out by the clerk of the crown; and that, of the two representatives of each of those places, the individual whose name should be first drawn should serve for the same place in the first united legislature; and that, when a new parliament should be convoked, writs should be sent to the Irish counties, to the university, and to the cities and boroughs above specified, for the election of members in the usual mode, according to the number now adjusted. With reference to the peers, the act provided, that the primate of all Ireland should sit in the first session of the combined parliament, the archbishops of Dublin, Cashel, and Tuam, in the second, third, and fourth; that the bishops of Meath, Kildare, and London-Derry, should take the first turn—the prelates of Raphoe, Limerick, and Dromore, should next sit—those of Elphin, Down, and Waterford, should have the next turn—those of Leighlin, Cloyne, and Cork, should follow—then those of Killaloe, Kilmore, and Clogher, and, lastly, those of Ossory, Killalla, and Clonfert; that the same order should then recommence, and continue for ever; and that, for the election of the twenty-eight temporal peers, each of the Irish nobility should prepare a list of twenty-eight of his brethren, and those who should have a majority of votes in such lists should be peers of parliament for life.

The resolutions which had been sent back from England were referred by the commons to a private committee:

committee : a report was soon presented and examined ; and, when sir Laurence Parsons had in vain moved for a consideration of the articles in a general committee, all the alterations were adopted. The peers, without delay, followed the example of the commons.

The countervailing duties were then adjusted ; the resolutions were formed into a bill ; and lord Castle-reagh, on the 21st of May, requested permission to produce it. Major Osborne, on this occasion, declared that he would continue to oppose the union as an unnecessary and pernicious measure ; Mr. Holmes supported it not only as salutary, but as absolutely necessary for the security of Ireland ; Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Ogle again assailed it. A long speech from Mr. Ball, warm, declamatory, and seasoned with personalities, gratified the members of opposition, and displayed talents which both parties admired, though it was pronounced by sir Henry Cavendish to be utterly destitute of argument. Mr. Latouche, Mr. Martin, and Dr. Browne, declared their conviction of the beneficial tendency of the measure, which, on the other hand, was condemned by sir Laurence Parsons and Mr. Goold on what they deemed strong and satisfactory grounds. On a division, the votes for the production of the bill were 160 against 100 : the bill was immediately presented, read *pro formâ*, and ordered to be printed. On the 26th, it was again read ; and a motion for its commitment followed, which produced a warm though not a very interesting debate.

Mr. GRATTAN proposed a delay to the 1st of August, that it might be more fully examined, and that more correct documents might be procured as foundations of the financial and commercial articles. He again discussed the principle of the measure. It
was,

was, he said, a breach of a solemn covenant, on whose basis the 'separate, reciprocal, and conjoint power of the countries relied; an innovation promoted by the influence of martial law; an unauthorised assumption of a competency to destroy the independence of the realm; an unjustifiable attempt to injure the prosperity of the country. The bill would be, *quoad* the constitution, equivalent to a murder, and, *quoad* the government, to a separation. If it should be carried into effect, he pretended to foretell its want of permanence, and intimated his apprehensions that popular discontent, perhaps dangerous commotions, might result from its enforcement.

LORD CASTLEREAGH defended the bill, and censured the inflammatory language of the orator who had condemned it. He called in question the patriotism of those who took every opportunity of inflaming the public mind against a settlement which was on the eve of conclusion; but, whatever might be their views, and however strong might be their allusions to rebellion, or their alarms of prophetic treason, he had no doubt of the energy and ability of the government to defend the constitution against every attack.

Sir John Parnell denied that a traitorous spirit could be justly imputed to the anti-unionists, and pronounced the remark to be applicable to those who wished to subvert the constitution on pretence of an union. Strong speeches followed on the same side from Mr. O'Donel, Mr. Plunket, and Mr. Burrowes; while Mr. May defended with warmth the proceedings of the court. Mr. Grattan replied with asperity to the insinuations of lord Castlereagh, who rejoined in a tone of moderation.

When the house had divided on the motion for delay,

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with a majority of 37 for the ministry, there was a renewal of debate, which terminated in the appointment of an early day for the commitment of the bill. The time was afterwards extended; and, in the interval, both houses agreed to the report of the counter-vailing duties, as sanctioned by the British parliament.

On the 5th of June, the bill of union passed through the committee with few remarks, and with little alteration. At the next meeting, lord Corry moved a long address to his majesty against the completion of the bill. Mr. Saurin seconded the motion, and repeated his objections to the union, because he thought they had not been answered or refuted. The attorney-general labored to expose the fallacy of the barrister's arguments; and, when Mr. Egan, Mr. J. C. Beresford, and Mr. Goold, had supported the address without the least novelty of reasoning, it was exploded by a majority of 58. By a plurality of 65 votes, the report was ordered to be read. An amendment proposed by Mr. O'Donel, of which we have not learned the exact import, excited a flame in the house, and was therefore withdrawn. When the same member, on the 7th, moved for a postponement of the third reading of the bill, a warm debate arose, in which the most striking (we will not add, the most judicious) speech was that of Mr. Dobbs. This gentleman, affecting to expound some of the scriptural prophecies, represented the divided and convulsed state of Europe as the accomplishment of one of Daniel's predictions, spoke of the condition of the Jews as another instance of the completion of prophecy, declared his confident expectation of the speedy arrival of the Messiah on earth, and, in a strain of visionary extravagance, argued that Ireland was the country in which our Saviour
would

would make his first appearance as a temporal prince, the sovereign of all the kings of the world. Entertaining these ideas, he was not alarmed at the progress of a bill which he detested, as he was convinced that it would never be operative.

Many of the anti-unionists retired from the house, that they might not witness the unpleasing ceremony of passing the bill. On the 9th, the proposal of an address of both houses to the king, in confirmation of the countervailing duties, furnished Mr. Dawson, lord Maxwell, and other gentlemen, with an opportunity of declaring, that, as soon as the bill should become a law, they would give it that support to which it would be entitled by such enactment, but which it did not deserve by its intrinsic merits.

The bill was immediately delivered to the house of peers by lord Castlereagh, but the consideration of it was postponed. On its second reading, the earls of Farnham and Bellamont strongly objected to it; and the former offered a clause, tending to annul the proportion assigned for the financial contributions of Ireland, and to leave the taxation of that country to the discretion of the imperial parliament. This clause was not adopted; and a majority of 59 appeared for the commitment of the bill. Having passed through that stage without amendment, it was reported in due form; and, after an uninteresting debate, it was sanctioned on the 13th by a majority of 52. A protest against it, not marked by strength or ability, was signed by the duke of Leinster and other peers, condemning the rashness of that minister, who, in critical times, 'hazarded the experiment of annihilating a constitution which had for so many ages maintained the connexion between Great-Britain and Ireland;' and

affirming, among other points, that the revenue of the latter country would fall short, by 3,250,000 pounds, of the sum necessary to discharge her proportion of the expences of the empire; a deficiency which would ultimately produce a state of bankruptcy and ruin.

In compliance with his repeated promise, the secretary brought forward the matured scheme of compensation. He plausibly supported its principle, as necessary for the demands of justice; and, in the detail, he proposed a grant of 1,260,000 pounds for those who should suffer a loss of patronage, and be deprived of a source of wealth, by the disfranchisement of 84 boroughs—at the rate of 15,000 pounds to each. Mr. Saurin, Mr. Claudius Beresford, and Mr. Dawson, maintained, that the grant of compensation to those who had no right to hold such a species of property would be an insult to the public and an infringement of the constitution: but Mr. Prendergast defended the proposition, alleging, that, though such possessions might have been vicious in their origin, yet, from prescriptive usage, and from having been the subjects of contracts and family settlements, they could not be confiscated without a breach of honor and propriety. In the house of peers, the bill for this extraordinary grant was chiefly opposed by the earl of Farnham; but it soon passed into a law, forming a precedent of corruption which few can justify or approve.

Soon after the bill of union had passed through both houses of the parliament of Ireland, Mr. Pitt presented to the British house of commons a bill of the same import. When it had proceeded through the usual stages without exciting any important debate, it was sent on the 24th of June to the upper house. On the 30th,

30th, lord Grenville moved for its third reading, declaring that he rose for that purpose with greater pleasure than he had ever felt before in making any proposition to their lordships. The marquis of Downshire merely said, that his opinion of the measure remained unaltered, and that he would therefore give the bill his decided negative. It was immediately sanctioned by the house without a division; and, on the 2d of July, it received from the king a solemn assent and confirmation.

When a prorogation of the last separate parliament of Great-Britain was ordered on the 29th of July, his majesty thus addressed the two houses on the subject of the grand work which had so laudably occupied their deliberations. ‘With peculiar satisfaction I congratulate you on the success of the steps which you have taken for effecting an entire union between my kingdoms. This great measure, on which my wishes have been long earnestly bent, I shall ever consider as the happiest event of my reign.’ It was the opinion of one of the Grecian sages, that no man ought to be pronounced happy before his death, or before it could be ascertained whether his happiness would be durable; and, in this point of view, the royal observation may be deemed premature, as the effect of the applauded scheme had not been tried for a moment: but we hope, and have reason to expect, that the remark will be fully verified.

In Ireland, the royal assent was given to the bill of incorporation on the 1st of August, the anniversary of the accession of the Hanoverian family to the British throne. The next day, the lord-lieutenant put an end to the session with an intimation of the king’s ‘warmest acknowledgements for that ardent zeal and unshaken

perseverance' which the two houses had so conspicuously manifested in the progress of the momentous affair, and a declaration that 'the empire, through their exertions, was so completely united, and by union so strengthened,' as to be able to 'bid defiance to all the efforts which its enemies could make, either to weaken it by division, or to overturn it by force.'

Of the twenty-eight temporal peers of Ireland who first obtained the honor of a seat in the imperial parliament, the majority were such as had promoted the union by votes or by private exertions, without appearing as orators in its defence. From the number were excluded the earls of Bellamont and Farnham, and several other strong opponents of the measure. Among the hundred commoners were Mr. Foster, sir John Parnell, Mr. Ggle, sir Laurence Parsons, Mr. W. B. Ponsonby, Mr. J. C. Beresford, lord Corry, and other leading anti-unionists.

Instead of ordering new elections for Great-Britain, the king, following the example of queen Anne, declared it to be expedient that the lords and commons of the parliament which had last assembled should be the members (on the part of England, Wales, and Scotland) of the respective houses of the first legislature of the united realms. A new parliament might properly have been called for the determination of the great question; but it was not necessary when the work was legislatively completed.

On the day appointed for carrying the union into effect (the 1st of January, 1801), his majesty presided at a numerous meeting of his privy counsellors, who, on this occasion, were confirmed in that dignity by a new oath. The great seal of Britain was delivered up and defaced; and a new seal for the empire was
given

given to the chancellor. The royal arms, the naval and military ensigns, were altered, and adapted to the change of circumstances; and the *fleurs de lys*, so long retained from idle ostentation, were omitted in the new arrangement. The name of *Britannia* being pluralised, the king's style in the Latin language was adjusted as follows: '*Georgius Tertius, Dei Gratia, Britanniarum Rex, Fidei Defensor.*' His titles in the vernacular tongue were ordered to be thus written: 'George the Third, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith.' A new standard, combining the three orders of St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick, was hoisted amidst the roar of artillery in each of the three capitals of England, Scotland, and Ireland; and, in compliment to the memorable day, some titular honors were bestowed, and many promotions in the army and navy were commanded by the sovereign of the empire.

The united parliament assembled on the 22d of January; and various incidents which demand the notice of an historian of the times, rather than of one who is merely a narrator of the affairs of the union, occurred in the progress of its first session. May the arts of peace flourish under its auspices! May its deliberations be dignified by wisdom, ennobled by humanity, and sanctified by honor and rectitude!

CHAP. XIV.

Remarks on the general Principle and the particular Articles of Union.

WHEN two adjacent realms are subject to the government of the same sovereign, they may be ruled without the risque of dangerous discord between them, if the king should, by habit or sufferance, exercise a despotic authority. But, when the prince is merely a limited magistrate (as common sense and the interest and happiness of mankind require that all rulers should be), it is difficult to preserve between such kingdoms a due connexion and concord. Jealousy and rivalry will arise, in proportion as one may be more favored than the other, or as one may, from natural or accidental causes, flourish more than its neighbour. As both may not be equally potent, rich, or respectable, the more considerable state may seek occasions of testifying its superiority, or of manifesting its power, which the weaker kingdom will indignantly brook; and the king, more inclined to gratify the former, may concur in depressing the latter, so as to rouse into complaint the murmurs of impatience. If the stronger realm should enter into a war, the other may be unwilling to engage in it; and this reluctance may so aggravate disgust, and inflame illiberality, that the inferior state may entertain a wish for separation, which may, at no distant period, break forth into action. The identity of the sovereign, in that case, will not operate as an effectual check; and a total dissociation may be the consequence of mutual animosity.

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When national councils or parliaments, of which the king is a component part, follow different courses under the same head, as if the interests of the two countries were distinct and incompatible, the evil may at length become irremediable under the ordinary system of government. Supposed palliatives may be applied without effect; or they may only serve to inflame the disorder. In this emergency, a legislative incorporation is the best resource, as it will closely combine the interests of the two nations, and utterly destroy that tendency to disunion which is the usual concomitant of two independent parliaments in one empire.

The idea of the annihilation of the independence of the less powerful realm, in consequence of an union of this kind, is not altogether well-founded. Though it ceases to be a distinct kingdom, it is as independent of foreign nations as it was before; and, though the superior influence which its former rival may have on the proceedings of the combined parliament may seem to threaten occasional injury, the apprehensions of such illiberality of conduct may be expected to subside, as the interests of both countries will, on reflexion, appear to be inseparable. Nominal independence may be lost; but a community of interest will ensure a participation of substantial independence.

On these grounds the expediency of an union between Great-Britain and Ireland might have been strongly supported, without reference to particular circumstances mentioned in the course of debate. But, when the danger of separation was augmented in an extraordinary degree by the propagation of republican principles, and doctrines of theoretical and imaginary perfection, a consolidation of the parliaments of those realms became perhaps more than expedient, even necessary,

cessary, to secure the well-affected and most respectable part of the Hibernian nation from slavery to a foreign power, and prevent the interests of Britain from being impaired or endangered.

Admitting the expediency of the incorporation, we proceed to examine the disputed point of parliamentary competency. The extensive power of parliament has been pompously blazoned; and even its omnipotence has been boldly predicated; but we cannot concur in an assertion, which, though not urged according to its literal import, tends to sap the foundations of public freedom. One branch of the parliament is confessedly a delegated body; and the power of such an assembly must, from its origin, be limited by the will of its constituents, and regulated by a regard to their welfare and happiness. The two other branches, we may fairly suppose, are also bound to consult the inclinations and the interests of the people, as it never could be intended that they should enjoy an hereditary right to act without control, or prosecute any measure which might be decidedly repugnant to the express wish of the nation. A 'right to govern wrong,' or to act in an arbitrary manner, forms no part of the constitution of this or any other country; and the discretion which is allowed to a national council ought not to involve such a plenitude of power as would triumphantly overbear the deliberate will of that portion of the community which rises above plebeian meanness. Some will allege that a parliament can do no wrong; but we know that legislators may be as fallible, weak, corrupt, and prejudiced, as other men; and, though the blame of a bad measure is divided among many, the act is not the less censurable. The statute for septennial parliaments, by which the representatives of the people
were

were continued beyond the expiration of their trust, without the formality of an appeal to the electors, was a daring infringement of constitutional principles ; and the great majority of votes by which it was supported could not justify so gross an usurpation. Can it be maintained that the parliament was competent to such an act of injustice ? If its universal competency be admitted, it would have equal authority for other invasions of the constitution, for other violations of equity. On the other hand, if its competency be denied, many important changes which have at different times been carried into effect without a particular appeal to the constituent body may seem to lose their validity ; and, therefore, all doubts of the fullness of parliamentary competence are reprobated by zealous unionists as tending to produce confusion, by weakening the authority and shaking the foundation of legislative proceedings. But it does not follow that those who insinuate such doubts have any wish to disturb or impair the acquiescence of the public in established measures, however irregular some of them may appear to the objectors.

It has been argued by an able politician, that, as the people are by our constitution deemed incompetent to the exercise of legislative power, even on common occasions, they are still more disqualified for directing the operations of parliament in affairs of extraordinary importance. But he seems to be unsuccessful in maintaining this point. It is not necessary to have recourse to the people in ordinary cases ; but, in points of momentous import, which may affect their essential interests, freeholders and other electors may claim a right of instructing the national representatives ; or an appeal ought to be made to them by a dissolution of parliament.

parliament. We are by no means disposed to recommend primary assemblies or democratic convocations, but merely suggest the general propriety of abstaining from any great political or legislative change, in a parliament summoned without the least notice or intimation of the project. Perhaps the critical state of Ireland may be pleaded as an excuse for a much greater deviation from constitutional principles: but this apology does not furnish a satisfactory reason for imposing an union on a reluctant people.

Of the chief articles of this union the author's unbiassed opinion remains to be given. The three first require no comment, as they necessarily spring from the nature of an incorporative coalition between kingdoms governed by parliaments and by the same head.

The fourth article is particularly important; and its provisions are liable to great dispute. The number of deputed peers we do not think sufficient, with a view to the dignity or comparative magnitude of Ireland, or to the whole amount of her peerage. Fifty would not have been too large a proportion for the representatives of her nobility in a parliament comprehending the whole body of English peers. The election for life merits approbation in one respect, as it is calculated to render the nominated peers more independent of the crown: but it is objectionable on the ground of its great diminution of the chance of appointment to the generality of the nobles, who will thus more acutely feel the degradation inflicted by this part of the scheme. It is, indeed, a striking instance of inequality in the arrangements, that so many of the peers of one country are in a manner disfranchised, while, in England, not an individual nobleman loses a single privilege. This disparity might have been avoided by the addition of all the
Irish

Irish peers to the British house of lords ; but, as such a provision would have immoderately increased the number of the assembly, it might have been expedient, and in a relative point of view not unjust, to subject some of the peers of England to a similar degradation.— The clause respecting the eligibility of the Hibernian peers to a seat in the house of commons we do not disapprove, as it affords some compensation for the encroachment on their hereditary rights, without exciting any serious dread of a confusion of rank.

The stipulated number of Irish members of the house of commons we consider as more fairly adjusted than that of the peers: but we should have been better pleased with the arrangement, if fewer placemen had been allowed, and if, while the less considerable boroughs of Ireland were disfranchised, the British representation had felt the benefit of a moderate reform, not founded on romantic theories of perfection, but regulated by the true spirit of our constitution.

The influence of the crown, which may at present be deemed exorbitant, will perhaps be increased by the transfer of Irish representatives to this country. The greater part of the number will probably, as it has happened in the case of Scotland, promote the views of the court: but the added weight, we think, will not make any material difference in the complexion of the parliament, or in the general mode of administration.

As the ecclesiastical article merely provides for an incorporation of two establishments which were founded on the same basis both of doctrine and discipline, it would not claim any observations, if its probable effects on the state of the majority of the inhabitants
of

of Ireland did not entitle it to some notice. The catholics of that country, if they had obtained a full grant of their demands from a separate parliament, might have so far augmented their power as to alarm the zealous protestants; but, under the imperial legislature, their progress will not arouse any fear or jealousy, as the great superiority of their religious adversaries in the united kingdom will effectually preclude the success of any violent efforts to which their eagerness may impel them. Their claims have excited some dissension in the cabinet; and a great personage, from conscientious motives, is disposed to resist those pretensions in which his benignity of character might otherwise acquiesce. But, if the two houses of parliament should be inclined to favor them, the royal opposition may be expected to subside.

The commercial stipulations are more favorable to Ireland than to Great-Britain: but a liberal community will not refuse to encourage a less flourishing neighbour, in consideration of a close union between the nations.

The regulations of finance are recommended by a fair adjustment of proportional contribution. The Irish have no reason to complain of being subjected to an immoderate share of the burthens of the empire; and, the former debts of the two countries being deemed separate concerns, they will not feel the very injurious effects of the enormous magnitude of the debt of Britain.

The plan, upon the whole, justly claims our approbation: but the means by which it was carried into effect were not equally meritorious. It is the opinion of politicians, that the end will justify the means: but
this

this is not an axiom of strict morality. The best cause may derive a tincture of disgrace from the irregular or dishonorable conduct of its promoters.

The grand political effects of the union will be the invigoration of the general government and the increase of imperial energy. The civil and social consequences of the measure will appear in the mutual participation of wealth and the comforts of life, the extinction or the decline of animosity and rivalry, the advance of humanisation among the rude Irish, and the promotion of peace and order ; and we may venture to predict, that it will establish the prosperity of this great empire on a firm basis, which will defy the assaults both of foreign and internal enemies, and which nothing but the silent attacks or the treacherous progress of abuse and corruption will be able to shake.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

The ACT of the British Parliament for an UNION with Ireland.*

WHEREAS, in pursuance of his majesty's recommendation, the two houses of the parliament of Great-Britain and the two houses of the parliament of Ireland have severally agreed and resolved, that, in order to promote and secure the essential interests of Great-Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength, power, and resources of the British empire, it will be adviseable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite those kingdoms, in such manner, and on such terms and conditions, as may be established by the acts of the respective parliaments:

And whereas, in furtherance of the said resolution, both houses of the said two parliaments have likewise agreed upon certain articles for effectuating and establishing the said purpose, in the tenor following:

That it be the first article of union, that the kingdoms of Great-Britain and Ireland shall, on the 1st day of January, 1801, and for ever after, be united into one kingdom, by the name of **THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND**; and that the royal style and titles appertaining to the imperial crown of the said united kingdom and its dependencies, and also the ensigns, armorial flags and banners thereof, shall be such as his majesty, by his royal proclamation under the great seal of the united kingdom, shall be pleased to appoint—

That it be the second article of union, that the succession to the imperial crown of the said united kingdom, and of the dominions thereunto belonging, shall continue limited and settled in the same manner as the succession to the imperial crown of the said kingdoms of Great-Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing laws—

That it be the third article of union, that the united kingdom be represented in one and the same parliament, to be

* Stat. 39^o et 40^o Georgii III. cap. 67.

styled

styled THE PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND:

That it be the fourth article of union, that four lords spiritual by rotation of sessions, and twenty-eight lords temporal elected for life by the peers of Ireland, shall be the number to sit and vote on the part of Ireland in the house of lords of the parliament of the united kingdom; and one hundred commoners (two for each county, two for Dublin, two for Cork, one for Trinity College, and one for each of the thirty-one most considerable cities, towns, and boroughs,) shall be the number to sit and vote on the part of Ireland in the house of commons of the parliament of the united kingdom:

That such act as shall pass in the parliament of Ireland previous to the union, to regulate the mode by which the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons, to serve in the united parliament on the part of Ireland, shall be summoned and returned to the said parliament, shall be considered as forming part of the treaty of union, and shall be incorporated in the acts of the respective parliaments by which the said union shall be ratified and established:

That all questions touching the rotation or election of lords spiritual or temporal of Ireland to sit in the parliament of the united kingdom, shall be decided by the house of lords thereof; and whenever, by reason of an equality of votes in the election of any such lords temporal, a complete election shall not be made according to the true intent of this article, the names of those peers for whom such equality of votes shall be given, shall be written on pieces of paper of a similar form, and shall be put into a glass by the clerk of the parliament whilst the house is sitting; and the peer or peers whose name or names shall be first drawn out by the clerk, shall be deemed the peer or peers elected:

That any person holding a peerage of Ireland now subsisting, or hereafter to be created, shall not thereby be disqualified from being elected to serve, or from serving or continuing to serve, for any county, city, or borough of Great-Britain, in the house of commons of the united kingdom, unless he shall have been previously elected as above, to sit in the house of lords of the united kingdom; but that, so long as such peer shall continue to be a member of the house of commons, he shall not be entitled to the privilege of peerage, or be capable of being elected to serve as a peer on the part of Ireland, or of voting at any such election; and that he shall be liable to be sued, indicted, and tried as a commoner, for any offence with which he may be charged:

That it shall be lawful for his majesty and his successors to create peers of Ireland, and to make promotions in the peerage thereof, after the union, provided that no new creation of any
such

such peers shall take place after the union until three of the peerages of Ireland, which shall have been existing at the time of the union, shall have become extinct; and, upon such extinction of three peerages, it shall be lawful for his majesty and his successors to create one peer of Ireland; and in like manner, so often as three peerages of Ireland shall become extinct, it shall be lawful for his majesty and his successors to create one other peer of that part of the united kingdom; and if it shall happen that the peers of Ireland shall, by extinction of peerages or otherwise, be reduced to the number of one hundred, exclusive of all such peers of Ireland as shall hold any peerage of Great-Britain subsisting at the time of the union, or of the united kingdom created since the union, it shall be lawful for his majesty to create one peer of Ireland as often as any one of such one hundred peerages shall fail by extinction, or as often as any one peer of that country shall become entitled, by descent or creation, to an hereditary seat in the house of lords of the united kingdom:

That, if a peerage shall at any time be in abeyance, such peerage shall be taken as an existing peerage; and no peerage shall be deemed extinct, unless on default of claimants to the inheritance of such peerage for the space of one year from the death of the person who shall have been last possessed thereof; and, if no claim shall be made to the inheritance of such peerage, in such form and manner as may from time to time be prescribed by the house of lords of the united kingdom, before the expiration of a year, it shall be deemed extinct; provided that nothing herein shall exclude any person from afterwards putting in a claim to such peerage; and, if the claim shall be allowed as valid, by judgement of the house of lords of the united kingdom, reported to his majesty, such peerage shall be considered as revived; and, in case of a new creation of an Irish peerage in the interval, from the supposed extinction of such peerage, no new right of creation shall accrue to his majesty or any of his successors, in consequence of the next extinction of any peerage of Ireland:

That all questions, touching the election of members to sit on the part of Ireland in the house of commons of the united kingdom, shall be heard and decided in the same manner as questions touching such elections in Great-Britain now are or at any time hereafter shall by law be heard and decided; subject nevertheless to such particular regulations in respect of Ireland as, from local circumstances, the parliament of the united kingdom may deem expedient:

That the qualifications in respect of property of the members elected on the part of Ireland to sit in the house of commons of the united kingdom, shall be the same as are now provided by law in the cases of elections for counties and cities

cities and boroughs of England, unless any other provision shall be made in that respect by act of parliament :

That, when his majesty shall declare his pleasure for holding the first or any subsequent parliament of the united kingdom, a proclamation shall issue, under the great seal of the united kingdom, to cause the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, who are to serve in the parliament thereof on the part of Ireland, to be returned in such manner as by an act of the present session of the Irish parliament shall be provided; and that the lords and commons of Great-Britain shall, with the lords and commons so returned for Ireland, constitute the two houses of the parliament of the united kingdom :

That, if his majesty, on or before the 1st day of January, 1801, on which day the union is to take place, shall declare, under the great seal of Britain, that it is expedient that the lords and commons of the present parliament of Great-Britain should be the members of the respective houses of the first parliament of the united kingdom on the part of Great-Britain, the said lords and commons shall accordingly be the members of that first parliament, with the lords and commons summoned and returned on the part of Ireland; and such parliament may continue to sit so long as the present parliament of Great-Britain may now by law continue to sit, if not sooner dissolved; provided always, that, until an act shall have passed in the parliament of the united kingdom, providing in what cases persons holding offices or places of profit under the crown in Ireland shall be incapable of being members of the house of commons of the parliament of the united kingdom, no greater number of members than twenty, holding such offices or places, shall be capable of sitting in the said house of commons; and, if such a number of members shall be returned to serve in that house as to make the whole number of its members holding such offices or places more than twenty, then the seats or places of such members as shall have last accepted such offices shall be vacated, at the option of such members, so as to reduce the number to twenty; and no person holding any such office or place shall be capable of being elected or of sitting in the said house, while there are twenty persons in it holding such offices or places; and every one of the lords of parliament of the united kingdom, and every member of the house of commons, shall, until the parliament shall otherwise provide, take the oaths, and make and subscribe the declaration, and take and subscribe the oath now by law enjoined to be taken, made, and subscribed by the lords and commons of the parliament of Great-Britain :

That the lords of parliament on the part of Ireland, in the house of lords of the united kingdom, shall have the same privileges

privileges of parliament which shall belong to the lords of parliament on the part of Great-Britain; that all lords spiritual of Ireland shall have rank and precedence immediately after those of Great-Britain of the same rank and degree, and shall enjoy all privileges as fully as the British lords spiritual do now or may hereafter enjoy the same (the right and privilege of sitting in the house of lords, and the privileges depending thereon, and particularly the right of sitting on the trial of peers, excepted); that the persons holding any temporal peerages of Ireland, existing at the time of the union, shall have precedence next after all the persons holding peerages of the like orders and degrees in Great-Britain, subsisting at that time; that all peerages of Ireland created after the union shall have rank and precedence with the peerages of the united kingdom, so created, according to the dates of their creations; that all peerages both of Great-Britain and Ireland, now subsisting or hereafter to be created, shall in all other respects be considered as peerages of the united kingdom; and that the peers of Ireland shall, as peers of the united kingdom, be sued and tried as peers, except as aforesaid, and shall enjoy all privileges of peers, except the right and privilege of sitting in the house of lords and on the trial of peers.

That it be the fifth article of union, that the churches of England and Ireland, as now by law established, be united into one church, to be called **THE UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND**; that the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the said united church, shall remain in full force for ever, as the same are now by law established for the church of England; that the continuance and preservation of the said church shall be deemed an essential and fundamental part of the union; and that in like manner the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland, shall remain and be preserved as the same are now established by law.

That it be the sixth article of union, that his majesty's subjects of Great-Britain and Ireland shall, from and after the 1st day of January, 1801, be entitled to the same privileges, and be on the same footing, as to encouragements and bounties on the like articles, being the growth, produce, or manufacture of either country respectively, and generally in respect of trade and navigation in all ports and places in the united kingdom and its dependencies; and that, in all treaties made with any foreign power, his majesty's subjects of Ireland shall have the same privileges, and be on the same footing, as those of Great-Britain:

That, from the same day, all prohibitions and bounties on the export of articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of

of either country, to the other, shall cease, and the said articles shall be exported from one country to the other without duty or bounty on such export:

That all articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of either country (not herein after enumerated as subject to specific duties), shall thenceforth be imported into each country from the other, free from duty, other than such countervailing duties as are specified in a schedule lately adjusted *, or such as shall hereafter be imposed by the parliament of the united kingdom; and that, for twenty years from the union, the articles enumerated in another schedule shall be subject, on importation into each country from the other, to the duties specified in that instrument †; and the woollen manufactures, known by the names of old and new drapery, shall pay, on importation into each country from the other, the duties now payable on importation into Ireland; salt and hops, on importation into Ireland from Great-Britain, duties not exceeding those which are now paid on importation into Ireland; and coals, on importation into Ireland from Great-Britain, shall be liable to burthens not exceeding those to which they are now subject:

That calicoes and muslins shall, on their importation into either country from the other, be subject to the duties now payable on the same on the importation thereof from Great-Britain into Ireland, until the 5th day of January, 1808; and, from and after that day, the said duties shall be annually reduced, by equal proportions as near as may be in each year, so as to stand at ten per centum from and after the 5th day of January, 1816, until the 5th day of January, 1821; and that cotton yarn and cotton twist shall, on their importation into either country from the other, be subject to the duties now payable upon the same on the importation thereof from Great-Britain into Ireland, until the 5th day of January, 1808; and,

* In this schedule, the highest customs, on importation into Britain from Ireland, are, for twenty hundred weight of cordage to be used as standing rigging, 4*l.* 10*s.* 3*d.*—for other cordage, 4*l.* 4*s.* 4*d.*—for a hundred weight of refined sugar, 1*l.* 19*s.* 1*d.*, &c.—for a pound of silk and ribands of silk mixed with gold or silver, 6*s.* 8*d.*: the highest duties of excise are, 2*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* for a hundred weight of flint, enamel, stained, paste, or phial glass—2*l.* 2*s.* &c. for other sorts of glass—the same sum for a barrel of sweets or made wines—19*s.* 2*d.* for a hogshead of cider—12*s.* 10*d.* for a thousand pan or ridge tiles—12*s.* 8 ½*d.* for a barrel of vinegar—10*s.* 6*d.* for a hundred weight of pasteboard; and 10*s.* for a bushel of salt. On importation into Ireland from Britain, the highest countervailing duties are, 2*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.*, &c. for a hundred weight of refined sugar—10*s.* for pasteboard—an equal sum for a pair of dice—and also for a barrel of sweets.

† Wrought brass, copper, and iron, cabinet ware, carriages, glass, pottery, leather, paper stained, haberdashery, hats, &c. are to be subject to a duty of 10 *per cent.* on the true value.

from and after the said day, the said duties shall be annually reduced by equal proportions as near as may be in each year, so that all duties shall cease on the said articles from and after the 5th day of January, 1816:

That any articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of either country, which are or may be subject to internal duty, or to duty on the materials of which they are composed, may be made subject, on their importation into each country from the other, to such countervailing duty as shall appear to be just and reasonable in respect of such internal duty or duties on the materials; and that for the said purposes the articles specified in the former schedule shall be subject to the duties set forth therein, liable to be taken off, diminished, or increased, in the manner herein specified; and that, upon the export of the said articles from each country to the other, a drawback shall be given equal in amount to the countervailing duty payable on such articles on the import thereof into the same country from the other; and that in like manner it shall be competent to the united parliament to impose any new or additional countervailing duties, or to take off or diminish existing countervailing duties, as it may appear to be just and reasonable, in respect of any future or additional internal duty on any article of the growth, produce, or manufacture of either country, or of any new or additional duty on any materials of which such article may be composed, or of any abatement of duty on the same; and that when any such new or additional countervailing duty shall be imposed on the import of any article into either country from the other, an equal drawback shall be given on the export of every such article from the same country to the other:

That all articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of either country, when exported through the other, shall in all cases be exported subject to the same charges as if they had been exported directly from the country of which they were the growth, produce, or manufacture:

That all duty charged on the import of foreign or colonial goods into either country shall, on their export to the other, be either drawn back, or the amount (if any be retained) shall be placed to the credit of the country to which they shall be so exported, so long as the expenditure of the united kingdom shall be defrayed by proportional contributions; provided always, that nothing herein shall extend to take away any duty, bounty, or prohibition, which exist with respect to corn, meal, malt, flour, or biscuit; but that all duties, bounties, or prohibitions, on the said articles, may be regulated, varied, or repealed, from time to time, as the united parliament shall deem expedient.

That it be the seventh article of union, that the charge arising

arising from the payment of the interest, and the sinking fund for the reduction of the principal, of the debt incurred in either kingdom before the union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great-Britain and Ireland, except as herein after provided :

That, for the space of twenty years after the union, the contribution towards the expenditure of the united kingdom in each year, shall be defrayed in the proportion of fifteen parts for Great-Britain and two parts for Ireland : and that, at the expiration of the said term, the future expenditure (other than the interest and charges of the debt to which either country shall be separately liable) shall be defrayed in such proportion as the parliament shall deem reasonable on a comparison of the real value of the exports and imports of the respective countries, upon an average of the three years next preceding the period of revision ; or on a comparison of the value of the quantities of the following articles consumed within the respective countries, upon a similar average, *vis.* beer, spirits, sugar, wine, tea, tobacco, and malt ; or according to the aggregate proportion resulting from both these considerations ; or on a comparison of the amount of income in each country, estimated from the produce for the same period of a general tax, if such shall have been imposed on the same descriptions of income in both countries ; and that the parliament shall afterwards proceed in like manner to revise and fix the said proportions according to the same rules, or any of them, at periods not more distant than twenty years, nor less than seven years from each other ; unless, previous to any such period, the parliament shall have declared, as herein after provided, that the general expenditure shall be defrayed indiscriminately, by equal taxes imposed on the like articles in both countries ; that, for defraying the expenditure according to the rules above laid down, the revenues of Ireland shall constitute a consolidated fund, which shall be charged, in the first instance, with the interest of the debt of Ireland, and with the sinking fund applicable to the reduction of the said debt, and, secondly, shall be appropriated towards defraying the proportion of the expenditure of the united kingdom, to which Ireland may be liable in each year : that the proportion of contribution to which Great-Britain and Ireland will be liable, shall be raised by such taxes in each country, as the parliament shall deem fit ; provided always, that, in regulating the taxes in each country, no article in Ireland shall be made liable to any new or additional duty, by which the whole amount of duty payable thereon would exceed the amount which will be thereafter payable in England on the like article : that, if at the end of any year a surplus shall accrue from the revenues of

Ireland, after defraying the interest, sinking fund, and proportional contribution and separate charges to which the said country shall then be liable, taxes shall be taken off to the amount of such surplus, or the surplus shall be applied by the parliament to local purposes in Ireland, or to make good any deficiency which may arise in the revenues of Ireland in time of peace, or shall be invested in the funds by the commissioners of the national debt of Ireland, to accumulate at compound interest, in ease of the contribution of that country in time of war; provided that the surplus so to accumulate shall at no future period be suffered to exceed the sum of five millions: that all money to be raised after the union, by loan, in peace or war, for the service of the united kingdom, shall be considered as a joint debt, and the charges thereof shall be borne by the respective countries in the proportion of their contributions; provided that, if at any time, in raising the contributions hereby fixed for each country, the parliament shall judge it fit to raise a greater proportion of such contributions in one country within the year than in the other, or to set apart a greater proportion of sinking fund for the liquidation of the whole or any part of the loan raised on account of the one country than of that raised on account of the other country, then such part of the said loan, for the liquidation of which different provisions shall have been made for the respective countries, shall be kept distinct, and shall be borne by each separately, and only that part of the said loan be deemed joint and common, for the reduction of which the respective countries shall have made provision in the proportion of their contributions: that, if at any future day the separate debt of each country shall have been liquidated, or, if the values of their respective debts (estimated according to the amount of the interest and annuities attending the same, and of the sinking fund applicable to the reduction thereof, and to the period within which the whole capital of such debt shall appear to be redeemable by such sinking fund) shall be to each other in the same proportion with the contributions of each country respectively; or if the amount by which the value of the larger of such debts shall vary from such proportion, shall not exceed one hundredth part of the said value; and if it shall appear to the parliament of the united kingdom, that the respective circumstances of the two countries will thenceforth admit of their contributing indiscriminately, by equal taxes imposed on the same articles in each, to the future expenditure of the united kingdom, it shall be competent to the parliament to declare, that all future expence thenceforth to be incurred, together with the interest and charges of all joint debts contracted previous to such declaration, shall be so defrayed indiscriminately by equal

equal taxes imposed on the same articles in each country, and thenceforth from time to time, as circumstances may require, to impose and apply such taxes accordingly, subject only to such particular exemptions or abatements in Ireland and in Scotland, as circumstances may appear to demand; that, from the period of such declaration, it shall no longer be necessary to regulate the contribution of the two countries towards the future expenditure of the united kingdom, according to any specific proportion, or according to any of the rules herein before prescribed; provided nevertheless, that the interest or charges which may remain on account of any part of the separate debt with which either country shall be chargeable, and which shall not be liquidated or consolidated proportionably as above, shall, until extinguished, continue to be defrayed by separate taxes in each country: that a sum, not less than the sum which has been granted by the parliament of Ireland on the average of six years immediately preceding the 1st day of January, 1800, in premiums for the internal encouragement of agriculture or manufactures, or for maintaining institutions for pious and charitable purposes, shall be applied, for twenty years after the union, to such local purposes in Ireland, in such manner as the parliament of the united kingdom shall direct; and that, from and after the 1st day of January, 1801, all public revenue arising to the united kingdom from the territorial dependencies thereof, and applied to the general expenditure, shall be so applied in the proportions of the respective contributions of the two countries.

That it be the eighth article of union, that all laws in force at the time of the union, and all the courts of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the respective kingdoms, shall remain as now by law established within the same, subject only to such alterations and regulations from time to time as circumstances may appear to the parliament of the united kingdom to require; provided that all writs of error and appeals, depending at the time of the union or hereafter to be brought, and which might now be finally decided by the house of lords of either kingdom, shall, from and after the union, be finally decided by the house of lords of the united kingdom; and provided that, from and after the union, there shall remain in Ireland an instance court of admiralty, for the determination of causes, civil and maritime only, and that the appeal from sentences of the said court shall be to his majesty's delegates in the chancery of Ireland; and that all laws at present in force in either kingdom, which may be contrary to any of the provisions enacted for carrying these articles into effect, be from and after the union repealed.

And whereas, the said articles having been laid before his majesty,

majesty, he has been pleased to approve the same, and to recommend it to his two houses of parliament in Great-Britain and Ireland to consider of such measures as may be necessary for giving effect to the said articles: in order, therefore, to give full effect and validity to the same, be it enacted by the king's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the foregoing articles, each and every one of them, according to the true import and tenor thereof, be ratified, confirmed, and approved, and be (and they are hereby declared to be) the articles of the union of Great-Britain and Ireland; and the same shall be in force and have effect for ever, from the 1st day of January, 1801; provided that before that period a bill shall be enacted by the parliament of Ireland, for carrying them into effect in the like manner.

[In this act is incorporated a bill for 'regulating the mode by which the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons, to serve in the parliament of the united kingdom on the part of Ireland, shall be summoned and returned to the said parliament.' For the substance of this statute we refer the reader to pages 493—5.

[A clause follows, importing that the great seal of Ireland may be used in that country as before the union, and that the privy-council of Ireland may be continued, at the royal discretion.

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FINIS.

ERRATA.

In page 83, line 9, for *would*, read *should*:—l. 30, for *the office*, read *a civil officer*:—p. 179, in the note, for *i.* read *ii*:—p. 447, l. 32, for *father of the bar*, read *learned gentleman*.

